

**EVALUATION OF THE
READER IN RESIDENCE PROJECT
SEPTEMBER 2007- AUGUST 2008**

**COMMISSIONED BY: LINDSEY DYER,
DIRECTOR, SERVICE USERS & CARERS**

CONTENTS

Executive summary	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
In the beginning.....	5
Reader Organisation.....	6
Objectives of Reader project	7
Objectives of Evaluation	10
Funding for the Reader project	10
Ethical considerations	11
Format of a Reader group	11
Key Personnel	12
SURE	13
Methodology	14

FINDINGS FROM EVALUATION

Summary of Reader interviews at outset of project	17
Summary of Reader interviews at mid point of project	19
Summary of Reader interviews at end of project	23
Executive Team interviews at outset	26
Executive Team interviews at end of project.....	28
Key Professional focus group/interview summary at outset	31
Key Professional focus group at mid point	36
Key Professional interviews at end of pilot	39
Volunteers	43
Ward/Unit Manager interviews at outset	44
Ward/Unit Manager interviews at end	45
Summary of service user interviews at outset of project: Cherry Tree	46
Summary of service user interviews at end of project: Cherry Tree	47
Cherry Tree: Observations and diary logs	49
Summary of service user interviews at outset of project: Crown Street	51
Summary of service user interviews at end of project: Crown Street	52
Crown Street: Observations and diary logs	53
Summary of service user interviews at outset of project: Mossley Hill	55
Summary of service user interviews at end of project: Mossley Hill	56
Mossley Hill: Observations and diary logs	58
Windsor House: Observations and diary logs	60
Summary of service user interviews at outset of project: Ruskin Ward	62
Summary of service user interviews at end of project: Ruskin Ward	63
Ruskin Ward: Observations	64
Summary of non-evaluated groups	66
Conclusions: Thoughts, themes and threads	70

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	73
Appendix 2	74
Appendix 3	75
Appendix 4	76
Appendix 5	79
Appendix 6	82
Appendix 7	83
Appendix 8	85
Appendix 9	86
Appendix 10	87
Appendix 11	88
Appendix 12	89
Appendix 13	91
Appendix 14	92
Appendix 15	94

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following much preparatory work with the Reader Organisation, Mersey Care NHS Trust launched the Reader in Residence (Get into Reading) project in September 2007. SURE (Service User Research & Evaluation) were asked to undertake a 12 month evaluation of the project, with particular reference to evaluating the impact of the project upon:

- The therapeutic benefit to the individual in terms of their health and well being, for example as seen by improved mood, appetite or communication.
- The social and cultural change in the environment, for example the day hospital or ward.

The basic format of a Reader group is one in which a group of people (in this case service users) participate in a reading group, facilitated by a 'Reader in Residence'. In addition to reading and listening, the group is designed to stimulate thoughtful and interesting debate based on the topics being read that day. The groups are intended to be flexible, accessible and inclusive to accommodate everyone's needs. Initially, each group is led by a Reader from the Reader Organisation, but the aim is that a member of Trust staff (Key Professional) ultimately takes over the facilitation of the group.

For the purpose of the evaluation, 5 pilot sites were identified for evaluation purposes: Crown St Resource centre; Windsor House; Ashworth hospital, Ruskin ward, Mossley Hill day hospital and Cherry Tree day hospital. Between them, these sites represent Adult Mental Health services, Older Peoples services, High Secure services, inpatients and day services.

The evaluation involved using a variety of methods such as focus groups and semi structured interviews with the key personnel involved in the project ie service users; Readers, ward/unit managers, Executive Team members and Key Professionals. In addition, participative group observations and Reader diaries were used to evaluate the groups themselves across the 5 pilot sites.

The outcome of the evaluation is that Reader groups appear to be delivering clear benefits not only to service users but also to the people involved in running/facilitating the groups. Some of the gains to service users include increased confidence, improved communication skills, enhanced memory skills, enjoyment and stimulation. Key personnel have reported gains in terms of their professional development, interest in literature and relationships with service users. Although more difficult to quantify, there is also evidence that the wider environment is benefiting from the Reader groups. People are engaging with one another outside of the groups and talking about non health related issues.

The evaluation supports the proposal to increase the amount of Reader groups being established across the Trust and to continue the development of existing groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost thank you to all those people who took part in the evaluation and who have contributed to its findings. In particular, the service users who agreed to be interviewed and who so warmly welcomed us into their groups. To the many staff at all levels of the organisation who similarly gave of their time and again offered us a warm welcome. Without you all, this study would not have been possible.

Many thanks to Dr Jane Davies from the Reader Organisation and to the two Readers in Residence, Mary Weston and Katie Peters. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to work with you all on this project.

Thanks to Lindsey Dyer, Director, Service Users & Carers, for commissioning the evaluation and to her PA, Carol Gannon for the excellent administrative support she has provided. We have all thoroughly enjoyed playing a part in this ground breaking development for Mersey Care NHS Trust and sharing the experience with you.

Thank you

Catherine Mills
Cathy Hyde-Price
Ita O’Keeffe
Vikki Fahey

SURE



IN THE BEGINNING...

In October 2006 Lindsey Dyer, Director, Service Users and Carers was contacted by a health colleague who advised Lindsey there was a Reader Project she had been involved with and thought Mersey Care NHS Trust might be interested in funding groups for service users. Lindsey responded with enthusiasm, thinking particularly of its value to inpatients who are regularly reported as saying they are bored and there is nothing to do on the wards. Lindsey contacted the Deputy Director of Adult Mental Health, the Trust librarian and a Learning Associate who all responded with equal enthusiasm. This led to Lindsey arranging for a meeting with Dr Jane Davies who was responsible for the Reader Unit at the University of Liverpool (now known as the Reader Organisation).

The initial meeting was held in February 2007 and following mutual exchange of information, it was agreed that Lindsey would put forward a proposal for a Mersey Care NHS Trust Reader Project for a 12 month period from September 2007. In the meantime Lindsey contacted all of the relevant Trust managers to seek support and identify funding for the project. Following much consultation a proposal was taken to the Executive Team in April 2007 where it received approval.

Moving into the implementation phase, a number of meetings were held comprising Lindsey Dyer, Jane Davies, the two Readers identified for Mersey Care NHS Trust (Katie Peters and Mary Weston who job share) and Judith Mawer, Learning Associate. Objectives were agreed, contracts drawn up, training sessions organised and a host of other measures agreed to ensure the smooth running of the project. SURE were approached in July 2007 and asked to undertake the evaluation and the project began in earnest in September 2007, although one pilot group had been running since April 2007 at Windsor House. The Reader group sites were set up gradually from September 2007 and this process continues at the time of writing in August 2008.

READER ORGANISATION, UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

The Reader Organisation (formally an outreach unit of the University of Liverpool) delivers 'Get Into Reading' which is a Merseyside-wide social inclusion project. To date the project has set up and delivered Reader groups in a variety of settings such as excluded school units, drug rehabilitation units, stroke units and elderly care homes. There are presently over 30 groups across Merseyside, mostly working with adults but also amongst children and young people. The project is now in its sixth year and Reader group facilitators (Readers in Residence) have experience of working with a range of hard-to-reach clients including those who use mental health services.

The Reader Organisation grew from the desire of its Director, Jane Davies, to make reading and literature accessible and enjoyable to everyone whatever their background, health status or reading ability. To illustrate the success of the project, Get Into Reading was a national finalist in the NHS and Social Care Awards in 2007.

OBJECTIVES OF THE READER PROJECT

Lindsey Dyer outlined the objectives of the Reader project within the proposal presented to the Executive Team in April 2007. These objectives are outlined below and reflect both national and local potential benefits of the project.

National Objectives

Star Wards initiative

The 'Star Wards' initiative, endorsed by the National Director of Mental Health, NIMHE/CSIP and the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, amongst others, emphasises the crucial part played by meaningful activity in the recovery journey of inpatient service users. The report cites *'Boredom, boredom, boredom. Really seriously nothing to do all day, all week, all the average of seven weeks long'* as the repeated concern of inpatients. 'Star Wards' seeks to enhance the therapeutic nature of inpatient wards by proposing a structured timetable of activities. The report recommends the greater use of volunteers and of input from educators and academics delivering activity in creative and innovative ways.

The 'Get into Reading' project and the appointment of a 'Reader in Residence' would address the following 'Star Wards' recommendations:

Volunteer(s) on ward at least 3 hours a day

Decent ward and hospital libraries, including leisure reading and self-help resources

5 day structure used with different topic each weekday

'Protected engagement time' for nursing staff, for uninterrupted patient contact

Full day's programme of therapy groups available

On-ward and cross-ward involvement of OT's and creative therapists

Core programme of activities on and off ward

Patients are encouraged to support each other

Each ward has recreation budget which patients decide on

Patients run 'special interest' sessions in own or other wards

'Recovering Ordinary Lives' – National OT Strategy

The therapeutic benefits of meaningful activity also underpin *'Recovering Ordinary Lives – The strategy for occupational therapy in mental health services 2007-2017'*, a service user speaking for many when he says *'Some of the things we do and benefit from have no tangible benefit, such as music or singing but leave us feeling invigorated'* (page v).

NIMHE Guiding Statement on Recovery (January 2005)

The appointment of a Reader in Residence and the consequent reading activities supports the principles outlined in the recovery model, which emphasises the importance of addressing the social, learning and development needs of service users. Principle III states that:

*'Users of service are able to recover more quickly when their:
Life roles with respect to work and meaningful activities are defined.
Educational needs as well as those of families/significant others are identified.
Socialisation needs are identified.
They are supported to achieve their goals.'*

The Ten Essential Shared Capabilities for Mental Health Practice

This guidance looks at workforce development in the context of training and learning needs and highlights:

- Working in Partnership
- Promoting Recovery
- Identifying people's needs and strengths
- Personal development and learning

'The Reader' training and methodology supports these areas of workforce development and offers opportunities to practice according to these principles.

Trust Objectives

The 'Get into Reading' project is supportive of the following 'Strategic Objectives' of the Trust:

To improve the experience of people who come into contact with our services
To be a good place to work
To achieve growth through partnerships
To promote the human rights of service users/carers and staff (right to a meaningful life)

Trust Services

The 'Get into Reading' project is consistent with many of the strategic aims of the Trust Business Plan 2006/2007. It supports:

Strategic Aim 1: Being the best at what we do by being innovative and promoting recovery and wellbeing. It should have a high profile and reputation with a wide range of stakeholders.

Strategic Aim 2: Involving service users and carers in their own care and all aspects of the Trust to focus the work of the Trust on the needs of service users and carers at all times by offering a timely, relevant and reparative 'therapy' and service that meets service user and carer needs for meaningful activity.

Strategic Aim 3: Being the place people want to work to attract, support and develop a high quality workforce by providing a learning and development opportunity for staff and facilitating enhancement of the working environment through creative activity.

Strategic Aim 5: Continually improving the way we provide services to respond to the needs of people who use them and their carers by providing meaningful activity that is relevant to people's needs and enhances

their sense of hope and recovery potential, as demonstrated by evaluation evidence.

Strategic Aim 6: Working well between services within the Trust and with partner providers to improve the experience of service users and carers by providing service users with meaningful things to do and promoting sociability and healthy relationships.

The therapeutic benefits of activity are well researched and documented, as are the negative impacts on people's mental health of their absence.

Appointing a Reader in Residence and promoting the delivery of reading groups Trust-wide across services has the following additional benefits:

- Supports the Recovery Model
- Promotes mental wellbeing
- Is suitable for protected therapeutic time
- Improves ward atmosphere
- Provides additional training and skills for staff, service users and carers
- Is accessible and inclusive
- Is adaptable to a wide client group
- Promotes genuine MDT and partnership working
- Promotes changing organisational culture
- Improves patient experience and reduces incidents
- Enhances learning and development for service users, carers and staff
- Improves social skills and inclusion
- Is fun and life-affirming

The model employed by The Reader is consistent with the drivers for therapeutic environments that are being embraced throughout services across the Trust and supports the Adult Mental Health initiative around protected therapeutic time.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION

Based on the ethos of the Get Into Reading project and early discussions with the Director, Service Users and Carers (Lindsey Dyer) and Reader project lead for Mersey Care NHS Trust (Judith Mawer, Learning Associate), it became apparent that two main objectives of the evaluation were emerging. This was backed up by published information^{1 2}.

The primary objectives were therefore to evaluate the impact of the Reader project on:

- The therapeutic benefit to the individual in terms of their health and well being, for example as seen by improved mood, appetite or communication.
- The social and cultural change in the environment, for example the day hospital or ward.

FUNDING FOR THE READER PROJECT

An annual budget of £30k was required to fund the Reader project for 12 months. This covered the cost of the appointment of a Reader in Residence for Mersey Care NHS Trust and associated costs of delivering the project, for example, training, CRB checks, provision of books, project management.

There was an enthusiastic response from the service directorates for the project and this is ostensibly how the 12 month project was funded. The Director, Service Users and Carers also contributed from her budget.

¹ Reading between the lines pilot study April 2006

² The Need to Connect: Signpost, Journal of Dementia and Mental Health Care of Older People, Volume 12, Number 1, June 2007

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the nature of the study, there were no major ethical implications to address and the likelihood of the evaluation causing distress to service users was considered low. However, one issue discussed was the potential for SURE members, when engaged in group observation, to inhibit the flow of discussion within the group. For this reason it was agreed that SURE members would participate and contribute to the discussions so that they were less intrusive and could be more readily absorbed into the Reader group. Due to the service users often having negative long-standing histories of notes being taken in clinical situations, it was further agreed the SURE members would not record any notes during the group session. At the beginning of every observed group session, the SURE member introduced themselves and briefly explained their role.

FORMAT OF A READER GROUP

The format of a reading session is flexible, accessible and inclusive, in order to accommodate everyone's needs. Sessions are held weekly for 1 to 2 hours, with ample opportunity for refreshments and chat in order to promote the social nature of the group. Text is read aloud within the group either by the facilitator or other group members, although this is entirely voluntary.

The Reader in Residence selects texts from an extensive resource library at the University and from these, the group members are encouraged to pick texts to be read that day. This helps various levels of literacy and interests to be accommodated. Copies of the texts are distributed among the group and can be kept by members afterwards. A person does not have to be functionally literate to enjoy the group, with many non-readers enjoying using their particularly sharp aural skills within the group. Similarly, some group members may be unable to read due to sight loss or be unable to hold a book for physical reasons. Following the reading of a passage of text or a poem, discussion takes place within the group, although this is entirely voluntary.

KEY PERSONNEL WITHIN MERSEY CARE'S READER PROJECT

The project involved the appointment of a full time Reader in Residence (two people job share) and a pool of volunteers. Initially there were in excess of 40 people volunteering, ranging from Trust staff to members of the community who wanted to contribute to the Reader project. From this pool of volunteers, 14 people (Key Professionals) were identified to receive additional training, enabling them to become Reader facilitators, eventually taking over from the Readers in Residence when they withdrew after 12 months.

The role of the volunteer was seen as ranging from helping with the refreshments, to putting people at their ease and contributing to the smooth running of the project.

In terms of management, Jane Davies, the Reader Organisation Director was responsible for managing the two Readers in Residence. Judith Mawer and Lindsey Dyer were the links with Mersey Care NHS Trust.

SURE AND SERVICE USER/CARER LED RESEARCH

SURE (Service User Research and Evaluation) is a small research group, comprising service users and carers. It has evolved in partnership with Mersey Care NHS Trust since 2001 and has a history of undertaking evaluations and research projects, particularly those concerning service user and carer issues. The defining point about SURE is that all members either experience mental health difficulties or care for someone who does. In this respect SURE has established a credible reputation for being able to empathise with the people whom they are researching.

As service users and carers, it was anticipated that SURE would fit smoothly into the project as researchers and be able to relate first hand to the Reader group members. With this in mind, Lindsey Dyer, Director, Service Users and Carers, commissioned SURE to undertake the evaluation in July 2007 and SURE was delighted to accept. The project would be evaluated from a range of perspectives, but the underpinning factor was that the evaluation would be service user and carer led throughout its course.

METHODOLOGY

During August 2007, SURE held 3 planning meetings during which it identified who would be approached for evaluation purposes, at what point and using what method. The following matrix summarises these points:

EVALUATION WITH	SAMPLE NO.³	WHEN & HOW?			
		OUTSET	MID POINT	END	OTHER
READERS	2	Semi structured interview	Semi structured interview	Semi structured interview	
KEY PROFESSIONALS	14	Focus group	Focus group	Focus group	
VOLUNTEERS	10	Semi structured interview	Semi structured interview	Semi structured interview	Exit interview if they leave prematurely
SERVICE USERS	30	Semi structured interview			Semi structured interview upon leaving group
MANAGERS	5	Semi structured interview		Semi structured interview	
EXECUTIVE TEAM	8	Semi structured phone interview		Semi structured phone interview	

³ The *actual* number of people interviewed will be indicated during the course of the report.

In addition, SURE would engage in participant observation across the 5 pilot Reader groups. The 5 pilot sites were identified with reference to when they started (ideally September/October starts) and what service they represented, thereby trying to ensure an even spread. The following 5 sites were identified:

PILOT SITE	DIRECTORATE	SERVICE TYPE	SURE MEMBER RESPONSIBLE
CHERRY TREE	Older people (Functional disorder)	Day hospital	CM
CROWN STREET	Adult mental health	Day service	IO
MOSSLEY HILL HOSPITAL	Older people (Functional disorder)	In patients ⁴	VF
RUSKIN WARD⁵	High Secure Services	In patients	CHP
WINDSOR HOUSE	Adult mental health	In patients	IO

The identified SURE member would be responsible for tracking their group through the project, including undertaking the associated interviews and participant observation on a monthly basis.

Some discussion took place around the pros and cons of participant observation. It was recognised for example, that the presence of an observer could disrupt the dynamic of the group. The outcome was that when a SURE member attended a Reader group, they would introduce themselves as a SURE member and a service user or carer and offer a brief explanation of their role. No notes would be taken during the group and the SURE member would participate appropriately in group discussions, while ensuring they remained sufficiently focussed to observe process. The pro forma used for the group observation is shown in Appendix 1, page 73.

Recruitment of participants was fairly straight forward as most were self selecting by virtue of their role. Service users who attended the initial Reader groups were asked if they would participate in a short interview and this process continued until up to 6 service users per pilot group had been interviewed. Obtaining initial data from 6 service users per group would result in a total of 30 service users being interviewed. Allowing for anticipated successful follow up of 50% of these original interviewees would enable data to be analysed from 15 service users which was deemed appropriate for evaluation purposes.

⁴ During the course of the evaluation, the Mossley Hill group transferred from the inpatient unit to the Day Hospital to incorporate day patients.

⁵ Initially, Unicorn Resource Centre was identified and evaluated. However, this group disbanded in November 2007 and Ruskin ward was identified as an alternative group for evaluation from February 2008.

By the end of the evaluation a total of 19 service users had been interviewed for outset interviews and 9 service users for end/exit interviews. There was one site (Windsor House) where, for particular reasons, no service users were interviewed.

The final data collection tool for the evaluation was the use of diary logs which were completed by the Reader in Residence following each Reader group. The diary/log pro forma is shown in Appendix 2, page 74. The logs from the 5 pilot groups were posted on a monthly basis to the appropriate member of SURE who was then responsible for analysing and collating the information within it.

FINDINGS FROM THE EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF READERS IN RESIDENCE INTERVIEWS AT OUTSET OF READER PROJECT

The actual semi structured interview format is shown in Appendix 3 on page 75.

The 2 Readers from the University of Liverpool were interviewed in person in September 2007.

Hopes and Expectations for the groups

In terms of hopes and expectations, both Readers were hoping for a stable group of people which could be built up. In this respect it was anticipated that Day Service groups may lend themselves better to continuity. It was felt important to establish groups in order that they continue after the pilot period ended. It was also felt important to build up relationships with staff in order to promote longevity of the groups.

One Reader specified that she wanted the participants to enjoy the group and not feel pressurised; whilst the other Reader said she was hoping for communication and interaction to take place between group members and not just via the Reader.

Anticipated problems

Both Readers felt that managing fluctuating membership and unstable group membership would be an unknown quantity and a challenge. It wasn't always easy for the Reader when they didn't know who or how many people would turn up.

One Reader said she felt that volunteer facilitators might find it difficult to find books and stories to use, although the University could help with this.

A further challenge might be in getting staff to encourage and engage 'harder to access' people in the groups. She felt it was important to give the right impression from the outset and not to put staff off.

Concerns or anxieties

One Reader raised selecting appropriate materials across the different groups in different settings as being a concern. Both Readers mentioned the fact they did not know how the discussions might pan out and how far they should push discussion in the group in case it triggered upsetting emotions for people.

Preparation for the Reader in Residence pilot

Both Readers were unequivocal in their belief that everything possible had been done to get the project off to a positive start. Both Judith Mawer and Lindsey Dyer were singled out for their enthusiasm and support which has optimised the potential success of the groups.

The other factor mentioned was the excellent response to the request for volunteers and again this would optimise the potential of the project.

SUMMARY OF READERS IN RESIDENCE INTERVIEWS AT MID POINT OF READER PROJECT (FEBRUARY 2008)

The actual semi structured interview format is shown in Appendix 4 on page 76.

The 2 Readers from the University of Liverpool were interviewed.

Were Hopes And Expectations Being Achieved?

Both Readers feedback was that the groups were all developing positively. There were 10 groups established at the time of interview which was maximum capacity for the 2 Readers. A positive atmosphere was reported, with the groups being well received and feeling a safe, comfortable and relaxed place to be. To date (February 2008) the hopes and expectations of the Readers were being met.

Anticipated Problems

Any anticipated problems of getting staff on board had not materialised and staff had worked hard in encouraging people to attend the group. The only problems arose if staff for example went off sick and there was no one else able to champion the Reader groups. This had happened on one occasion. Similarly, if key staff left then organisational difficulties could arise.

There were some problems in terms of achieving a stable group membership at Windsor House and Mossley Hill Hospital in particular, and also with getting access to a suitable room at Windsor House. The Readers endeavoured to manage the situations as best they could and the groups did run despite the problems encountered. On the whole both Readers concluded the groups were running very well, each in its own way.

Unexpected Outcomes

One Reader noted, how initially, the group seemed very closed, but that over the weeks people had gelled and opened up to each other.

The other Reader said it had been harder than anticipated getting the Key Professionals together for training sessions. The logistics were difficult eg finding time when everyone was available, but it also appears that some of the Key Professionals were fundamentally more committed than others to their role.

The reader also commented that it was more difficult than anticipated to hand over some of the groups to the Key Professionals. The Key Professionals in question were very committed and enthusiastic but were concerned that if the Reader in Residence withdraws, it could cause some instability within the group. The Reader recognised that such a hiatus may occur, but that it would only be temporary and that the group would soon regain its shape.

An advantage of having an independent Reader in Residence is that they do not have any ongoing therapeutic relationship with the members. If an OT or

nurse for example, facilitates the group, then they might, for instance, have to correct a member in a behavioural sense when working with them therapeutically outside the group. This potential role conflict does not apply to the Reader in Residence, who is perhaps in a stronger position to nurture a friendly, non-hierarchical atmosphere. This was not a criticism of the clinical role, purely an observation.

Preparation work with Mersey Care NHS Trust

Both Readers gave an emphatic positive response when asked had the preparation work with the Trust enabled the groups to run effectively. The preparation had been fundamental to the growth and development of the project. The pre-group visits and meeting with staff proved particularly helpful to one Reader. The other Reader said the only thing she would change would be to undertake the training with the Key Professionals *prior* to the groups commencing, which might have enabled the groups to be handed on a little earlier and given the Key Professionals more confidence in their skills, from the outset.

Development of individuals and the 'unit'

Both Readers said that progress had been different for each respective group. Some of the terms used by the Readers to describe how individuals were progressing include: increased confidence; people talking more; wanting to read aloud; people coming out of themselves; and talking between group members. One of the Readers noted a definite sense of community building up within the group itself. Even where tangible progress could not be observed, as one Reader put it 'they have had an hour in a world with a book'.

On occasion it was noted by one Reader that the group could be a bit top heavy with staff.

In terms of overall ward/unit culture, it was still early days. There was certainly enthusiasm for the Reader groups, but no overall observable changes in atmosphere/culture.

Enjoyment

Each Reader was asked to quantify the extent to which they were enjoying facilitating the group on a scale of 1-10 (where 0 = the lowest score and 10 the highest). One Reader rated it as 8 whilst the other rated her enjoyment as 10.

Selection of appropriate reading materials

One Reader commented how each group was different and how she personally found poems easier to use. Good short stories were harder to find and potentially had upsetting material in them. The other Reader noted how it was an ongoing challenge to find new materials as once something that worked well had been used, it could not be used again! She also observed that there was sometimes pressure from staff to read something 'happy' whereas she had pushed for deeper texts on occasions including death, which happened to be relevant to the group...and they coped with it well.

One of the Readers noted that a Hardy story had been enjoyed by one particular group, plus one about two old ladies escaping from a nursing home and having an adventure! On the whole, she found the groups liked a positive ending.

Volunteers

The role of the volunteer had not really taken off at the time of interviews, but a meeting was scheduled with Trust managers to identify a possible volunteer role for them.

Key Professionals

Positive progress was reported by both Readers and work was ongoing to encourage some of the Key Professionals to take on the role of group facilitator. On the whole the role of the Key Professional was proving successful.

Improvements

In terms of suggestions for how the groups could be improved, one Reader felt that continuity was the key factor, with Crown Street standing out as a good example of this. Other groups had developed specific characteristics, so for example it was felt that a staff training session for Cherry Tree staff might help them as so many had made a contribution to the group there. At Windsor House there was a group stability problem, whilst at Broadoak the group was slowly learning to relax a little.

One Reader felt that 1 ½ hours, as opposed to the scheduled 1 hour at some locations would allow more time for ideas to grow and develop through discussion.

Future of the groups

Both Readers felt strongly that they wanted the groups to continue beyond their personal involvement and hoped that the staff would be able to use the existing model for the benefit of service users. For Moss House where a 12 week pilot had been set up, it was hoped that the group could develop into a permanent one. At Mossley Hill, plans were underway to set up a group for patients with Dementia.

Future Concerns

One Reader expressed a concern about what might happen when the groups are handed over. If other pressures exist within the service or staff are off sick, then the Reader group may be the first thing to go. She was also anxious that quality did not deteriorate in terms of the texts used. She suggested that ongoing support be provided to the Key Professionals in terms of reading materials and that novels could be used, but only if there was a very stable group membership.

One of the groups was potentially going to be affected by organisational changes over the coming months, and the Reader was concerned that this didn't affect the group, for example, if it became difficult to find a quiet, undisturbed location.

SUMMARY OF READERS IN RESIDENCE INTERVIEWS AT END OF READER PROJECT (JULY 2008)

The actual semi structured interview format is shown in Appendix 5 on page 79.

The 2 Readers from the University of Liverpool were interviewed.

Were hopes and expectations achieved?

For both Readers, the answer to this is a definite 'yes', especially in the groups which were able to establish a stable membership. Staff have shown willingness to become involved which bodes well for the future of the groups.

Anticipated problems

When a problem arose in one group (a Key Professional left), it was thought the group may have to dissolve at one point. However, the Reader kept the group running with the aid of an OT and eventually another Key Professional came forward who is very enthusiastic and committed.

One Reader commented that the volunteers had not been needed as originally anticipated, and one Key Professional was still to be allocated to a group.

However, no major problems were reported by either Reader.

Unexpected Outcomes

One Reader mentioned about how a service user takes the books home to read with her daughter, who in turn shares them with a friend, thereby gaining far reaching outcomes from the original group!

The other Reader described how the role of the OT has been instrumental in some groups, especially their ability to assess a situation. For example, a service user may leave the group after 20 minutes, but that may actually represent a big improvement for that person. The individual level of assessment and knowledge can be very helpful. However, it could potentially be detrimental if some of the freedoms are lost, so a balance needs to be struck.

The issue of potential power imbalance also arose, in situations where staff may have the capacity to make decisions about a service user's care.

Preparation for the Reader in Residence Pilot

For both Readers, the preparatory work was very important and laid a good foundation for getting the Reader groups established.

One Reader felt she would have done more preparatory training with staff, whilst the other Reader said she would have involved some of the managers in her initial meetings eg OT managers.

Overall, the preparatory work such as initial ward visits and meeting the staff proved really helpful to the Readers.

Impressions as to how the groups have developed (including individual development)

Both Readers were able to identify clear examples of group and individual development.

The Readers felt each group was different. For example, at Cherry Tree day hospital, some people have clearly relaxed as the group has gone on and this shows in their communication and body language.

At Scott Clinic, there have been 4 regular attendees and it is not so much about individual development, but it is a popular group.

Moss House is proving to be a close knit group.

At Windsor House, one gentleman has now attended for 8 or 9 sessions.

At Broadoak, a lot of work is being done on enabling the group to 'loosen up'.

At Mossley Hill day hospital, there has been a marked change in the group. Initially, people were reluctant to speak, appeared withdrawn and nervous. Now with a group of regular attendees, there is a relaxed atmosphere, lots of discussion and disclosure of personal experiences. One lady who did not speak for the first 4 sessions, went on to talk about her time living in London and her adventure to France with a friend when she was in her 20's.

Enjoyment

On a scale of 1-10 (where 0 is the lowest) both Readers rated their level of enjoyment facilitating the groups as 8.

Selection of appropriate reading materials

One Reader found it relatively easy to access appropriate reading materials for the group. The other Reader initially found it hard, but said it was working better now there were multiple copies of texts available.

Specific Texts

A range of texts were used across the groups ranging from poems, short stories and longer stories read over consecutive weeks. Some of the specific texts proved popular with groups were:

Moss House & Cherry Tree day hospital: *Cider with Rosie*

Cherry Tree day hospital: *The Uncommon Reader*

Kevin White: *Penny in the Dust*

Mossley Hill: *The Melancholy Hussar of the German Legion and Faith & Hope Go Shopping*

Some groups appeared to enjoy the prose/stories whereas others focussed on poetry. Where stories were read, often the group would finish off with a short poem.

Volunteers

Volunteers have been used only very occasionally and not in the numbers originally anticipated (see page 43).

Key Professionals

Both Readers consider the Key Professional to have an important role re logistical considerations such as room bookings, refreshments, recruiting members and physically enabling them to get to the group. However, their contribution extends far beyond this into co-facilitating, observing clinical state, having a good background understanding of the service users, facilitating conversation and ultimately taking over the group. Their role is considered vital and there appear to be some extremely able and willing members on board.

Improvements

One Reader commented that developing links with local libraries and possibly having mixed community groups eg service users and non service users, could be a step forward.

Future of the groups

The main hopes are that the current groups continue to run in a relaxed, informal manner, where people can come along and discuss deep, personal and important issues in a non-threatening way. It is hoped that groups will become established and that Key Professionals will maintain links with the Reader Organisation. One Reader hopes there can be more specific training to help people develop the skills to engage with literature; and perhaps general training so that people know what the groups are about. Crucially, it is hoped that relationships and friendships will be built upon.

Future Concerns

One Reader is concerned that naturally occurring hospital changes might disrupt the groups and threaten their continuity. The other Reader commented that enthusiasm may get lost eg group cancellations or the group gets watered down into a current affairs/events group. There was also a need to support the future of the groups by providing or suggesting appropriate reading materials.

MERSEY CARE NHS TRUST EXECUTIVE TEAM INTERVIEWS (OUTSET)

6 members of the Trust's Executive Team were interviewed either in person or via the phone between September and November 2007. There were 4 questions asked of each senior manager and the following responses were received in respect of each question.

The interview format is shown in Appendix 6, page 82.

What is your understanding of the Reader in Residence Project?

All 6 interviewees were aware that the Reader project involved literature and reading groups in a clinical setting, with 3 interviewees making reference to 'meaningful' or 'therapeutic' activity for people. 3 interviewees specifically mentioned that the groups involved the use of volunteers.

All the managers interviewed were able to answer the question, with only 1 stating that their knowledge was 'very limited'. Interestingly this person's response to the question suggested that they did in fact have a good grasp of the project.

Overall the responses indicated a good understanding of the Reader in Residence Project. One final point is that some staff did make specific reference to having *ward* based groups which perhaps suggests that not everyone is aware that the groups also run within day services.

What outcomes are you hoping for from the Project?

There was a wide range of responses received to this question which have been grouped into the following categories.

Change the culture of the service user environment

Improve how professionals engage and interact with service users (2 interviewees)

Improve relationships between professionals and service users

Help service users to develop their interest in reading (including when they leave hospital) (3 interviewees)

Less frustration felt by patients on the wards (due to boredom)

Provide meaningful therapeutic activity for people (3 interviewees)

Help and support recovery

Improve friendship

Benefits to the Trust eg corporate staff who, by getting involved, can see what the Trust does

Coal face reality for professional staff

Do you anticipate any problems?

Competing for staff time on the wards

Project becomes diluted because staff cannot support it

Requires a certain degree of ability on the part of the Reader to make it work

Teething problems

Potential for lack of interest from patients

Detrimental effect on the self-esteem and confidence of service user if the group 'wasn't their thing'.

Need to take account of how service users want to spend their day

Are you personally involved in the Reader in Residence Project?

No, but intend to be (4 interviewees)

No, due to role and time commitment (2 interviewees)

MERSEY CARE NHS TRUST EXECUTIVE TEAM INTERVIEWS (END)

During the evaluation period, 3 individuals have joined the Executive Team and 1 has left. Of the original 7 team members, 4 responded to requests for an end interview. They were each asked up to 9 questions and their collective responses to each question are detailed below.

The interview format is shown in Appendix 7, page 83.

Did the project live up to your expectations?

The project lived up to or exceeded the expectations of the 3 managers involved in the project. The participation by both service user and staff had been much greater than expected. However, one manager who likes reading and gets a lot out of it, felt that the depth of penetration amongst staff that had been hoped for was not experienced. The staff who were involved were great, but this manager was disappointed there were so few involved. One manager who was able to become involved felt that the project appeared to be a success, helping the service user to think outside the box.

Were the outcomes you were hoping for achieved?

The responses were somewhat brief compared with the scope and scale of responses at the outset.

It was felt that service users were reading on their own more and having conversations about their reading habits. There was also a lot of discussion about future books and reading tastes.

The project was described as achieving the outcome of engaging the service user in reading in a relaxed atmosphere.

Were there any unexpected outcomes?

Just 1 manager was able to provide any detail for this question.

The group concerned were now reading Wuthering Heights. This was not only a challenge but also unexpected.

It became apparent that some service users had received very little formal education and were largely self taught. The willingness of the group members to persevere and help each other was very impressive. There was definitely a sense of shared learning and enjoyment within the group.

The manager had also found it enjoyable to read in front of people who were also patients of the manager and felt that discussions between service users of 'who is so and so?' have helped the interactions of the service users in the group.

Did you observe or experience any problems with the project?

One manager had expressed concern that facilitators might try to be “amateur therapists” during the reading groups but this fear was not realised at all.

Other problems which arose concerned the noise on the ward (building work was being done at the time) and the difficulty experienced when trying to ensure ward-based nurses were free to join the group on a regular basis.

Have you received feedback about the project?

From whom?

What was it?

Articles in Mersey Cares have provided some feedback for 1 manager, while other managers have heard positive accounts from not only staff, but also the media and other organisations.

Another manager who is very positive about the project was aware that because of their personal support, only positive messages might find their way back and not necessarily reflect the feelings of everyone.

Other encouraging signs have been that service users (who have not taken part) want to join a group at a later date and 3 members of staff want to start up a group.

One service user wanted to drop out temporarily until a new book was chosen, but did not wish to leave the group.

All the feedback has been positive.

Would you like to see the Reader in Residence project continue?

The response to this was unanimous and included reference to the project being superb, that it could be expanded and that it provided clear benefits for the recipients.

(One manager who had not been personally involved in the project was not asked the following 3 questions:)

To what extent have you enjoyed your involvement with the project?

(0 = not at all, 10 = extremely enjoyable)

The responses here were the maximum score of 10 and even an 11/10!

What are your impressions as to how the reading group has developed? If/how individuals have progressed? Cultural/social change?

Groups had developed well with service users becoming more confident after being unsure at the outset. Staff on the ward, in the library and all those involved have been very supportive. The reading group seems to have found

its place on the ward and has the significant potential to bring the richness and pleasure of reading into people's lives.

Are there any ways you feel the group could be improved? If so, how?

Possible improvements ranged widely:

- The development of further groups
- The placing of service users as readers in a group
- Adding to the cultural and creative aims of the Trust
- Providing an overview of the plot and main characters earlier in the reading of a book
- Finding ways to include or bring in more interested ward staff into the group
- Maybe having more than one group on a ward
- Finding other ways to recruit more service users because many more could gain from and enjoy the groups
- Providing more information/training about the importance of groups to service users, so that staff may begin to consider that they could be a Reader as part of their role

KEY PROFESSIONALS FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW SUMMARY AT OUTSET OF PROJECT

The following questions were asked of 8 Key Professionals either via a focus group or individual interviews/emails and there follows a summary of their responses.

The focus group/interview format is shown in Appendix 8, page 85.

What is your understanding of the Reader in Residence project?

A creative means to encourage people to engage in literature.

The social aspect gives service users the opportunity to relate to one another and provides education in a leisurely setting.

It is a meaningful activity which should be accessible without any pressures, as a therapeutic medium, for the benefit of the service user.

The group has someone with more knowledge of literature who comes to the groups.

It is an opportunity for service users to have something facilitated by a non-Mersey Care Trust member of staff ie. External to the MDT.

Part of a range of cultural projects and opportunities designed to transform the experience of care.

To provide space and an opportunity for staff and service users to come together differently in order to enjoy literature.

It is using literature to help people explore their thoughts and feelings and also helping to improve their mental health.

How do you see the role of Key Professional within the project?

To provide motivation.

Putting Service Users at the heart of the project.

To remain watchful in order to keep service users safe.

They allow people to express their emotions and not to be scared of them, for if people cry or become upset they learn.

All the groups should have the same guidelines and introductions. There will be different styles but it has to be structured.

To enlighten the Reader about what works and tailor the model, managing the risk environment and monitoring patient's presentation.

To identify if the project will meet the needs of the service user.

To be an organisational element, to ensure the Health and Safety of all people in the group.

To carry out mental and skills monitoring and skills development.

Ensuring appropriate service users are directed to the group.

To educate the Reader on the impact of mental health on a service user.

To prepare the Reader for the possible behaviour/response of the service users in or to the group.

To be a participating member of the group.

To ensure continuity and help guide the group towards exploring reading material more thoroughly.

What are you personally gaining from being a Key Professional?

Keeping well trained and it's part of my personal development.

Broadening my skills.

Enjoyable to be in something that is developing.

Meeting people working in the Services.

Frontline dedication.

The opportunity to be read to, to be aware of new literature and forging links with the University.

The opportunity to use a different type of medium.

To get a better understanding of service users in the group. It is also quite nice to take an hour out of the week legitimately to look at literature.

The opportunity to participate and enjoy the group. It adds richness to the work experience and has spilled over into non work time, too!

What do you feel Service Users are gaining from the groups?

Sense of belonging and well-being.
There is no pressure to read.

No need to have great intellectual ability.

It can have a massive therapeutic impact, bad emotions can be therapeutic.

Proactive.

Some may become more educated.

More likely to talk to staff afterwards.

It gives service users another choice from the activity programme.

They gain in confidence.

It's a supportive environment, safe, they engage with staff who understand their needs.

It's good for helping service users with their concentration and attention skills.

It's enjoyable and fun and can inspire reminiscences, ie, the opportunity for service users to express their own experiences.

It provides the opportunity to read, it is relaxing and generates only low stimulation.

It is a quiet recreation and can be accessible to all demographics.

Enjoyment of literature and an interest that will develop into other areas of life.

The opportunity to model pro-social behaviour, like being assertive and allowing others to speak.

To explore the behaviour of others and help describe their feelings.

Seeing clinicians in the group helps to develop collaborative working.

Do you have any personal concerns or worries about your role at this stage?

In the main, no, but one Key Professional commented *"How to fit this in with what is already quite a busy week."*

What motivated you and continues to motivate you in the project?

The service users enjoy it and the Reader is fab!

Keen to develop a system where discharged service users could still take part in Reader in Residence rather than losing it.

Would like to see it across all age ranges.

Groups can break down barriers of age and gender.

I enjoy literature.

Seeing how service users are coming week after week and building a rapport.

Keen to promote, lead by example, creative approaches to health and wellbeing.

The opportunity to read a book in work time!

To develop the groups we offer to service users and encourage them to develop strength and positive personality traits.

If you have needed support, where has this come from?

From the Reader, from manager who has been very encouraging, from the OT team on the day.

Support has not been needed.

Practical help like swapping books.

Line manager.

Are you having any difficulties finding the time to:-

- **Attend the training**
- **Co-facilitate the group**

No, the Reader is very understanding and so are the clients. Manager assists with time management. Have included support workers to provide extra assistance when required.

No, but one day I was late because I was delayed on the ward.

Yes, because my job is split across 2 sites because of my job roles and responsibilities.

Difficulties are likely to be experienced attending training and the reading groups as clinical duties will take priority at times. There will always be issues that arise and prevent attendance.

To ensure the group continues when one Key Professional is absent, there are two Key Professionals to ensure continuity. More staff are also getting involved, too.

To what extent are you enjoying your role as a Key Professional within the project? (0 = not at all. 10 = extremely enjoyable)⁶

9. The loss of one mark is due to other pressures

⁶ This supplementary question was asked of three Key Professionals at the outset stage as they had already started in their role.

9.

7. I have been a bit disappointed that we have had no other people are involved, just the Reader and myself.

Any other observations?

Would not like to see it watered down

Lots of potential

Cost effective

I did not volunteer to be a Key Professional

KEY PROFESSIONALS FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY FROM JANUARY 2008 (MID POINT)

The focus group/interview format is shown in Appendix 9, page 86.

4 Key Professionals participated in this mid point focus group held on January 24th 2008.

The SURE researcher was made very welcome in the focus group, which took place immediately after a Key Professionals' training meeting. Due to time commitments, one person had to leave before the end of the focus group. All four Key Professionals were overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic in their experience of, and commitment to, the Reader project.

The Key Professionals understanding of the Reader in Residence Project, at this midpoint of the project, was chiefly to do with the project's role in building service users' confidence: *"To increase people's self-confidence and self-esteem. People are starting to read. To help people recover, to make an emotional connection."*

The Key Professionals were particularly happy that this was achieved in a pleasant, sociable context, which didn't focus unduly on the service users mental health problems: *"There's a bit of bonding. Something to talk about other than their illness. Something they can take away into the community."*

The Key Professionals appeared confident in their role within their respective settings. All demonstrated a very active involvement in the practicalities of their role. Two emphasised the very pragmatic aspects of their role, i.e., securing and preparing the venue, and using their good working relationships with service users to motivate them and organise them to attend: *"Currently it's about preparation: getting the venue sorted and organising the service users. Knowing about the service users as individuals, how they'll react."*

In addition to maintaining the practicalities of the group, the Key Professionals were also keenly aware of their role in supporting the groups in their future development. They were encouraging of members' suggestions for future texts, and one wished to take the group's development outside of its day centre setting: *"Would like to develop the group, for instance, I'd like to get people listening to reading on the radio programme "One Word" on digital radio, and audio books, as a way of maintaining and developing the group."*

All four Key Professionals reported strong personal gains from their involvement. All felt they had benefited both from the literary content itself: *"I've learned how massively important reading is to myself. This has renewed my own reading. It makes a massive difference to me personally."*

In addition to experiencing the renewed pleasure of literature, all four felt they had gained personally from the fact that their experience of literature was in a group context, involving personal observations and recollections from group members: *"There's so much to each person. I grew up in a story-telling culture. I enjoy hearing about other people's lives."*

“Other staff catch our enthusiasm. It’s like laughter in the way that it’s contagious; we come out of the group buzzing, the buzz comes out with us, and the other staff catch some of that.”

The Key Professionals were all in agreement that service users were gaining from being in the Reader groups. They noted that the groups are essentially an enjoyable experience for the service users participating. The fact that attendance at the groups is optional and totally at the service user’s discretion was felt to be a strength, offering service users dignity and recognition: *“They can pick it up, come and go. There are no set groups; this is a good, new idea.”*

“People currently feel not very well treated, and this gives them a break.”

The Key Professionals also agreed that service users were gaining in confidence and self-esteem. They felt that the group context of the Reader project provided service users with *“a personal touch”*; *“a gentle personal effect”*.

The Key Professionals reported a range of minor personal concerns about their roles. These concerns were chiefly to do with the Key Professionals’ relatively short-standing experience within the groups, and the subsequent mild anxiety about their facilitation of the group. Any concern in this regard was accompanied by the expectation of continued personal gains in confidence and skills: *“Sometimes, if people go off on a tangent, I think, well, isn’t that ok? But I feel I’m still learning, and my confidence will increase.”*

“I’m still a bit anxious about actually doing the reading myself. I’d like the support to continue in some form.”

All Key Professionals demonstrated strong motivation within the project. They were unanimous in asserting that they derived great motivation from each other, i.e., peer-to-peer support from other Key Professionals. They agreed that sharing experiences and learning with each other is vital both in terms of improving Key Professional performance, and in sustaining the enthusiasm which they undoubtedly have for the Reader Project.

“If we could all continue meeting up during the year, maybe four times a year, us key professionals...”

The Key Professionals all reported feeling well supported in their role. They agreed that clear information had been made available from the outset, for instance through the initial information day and from representatives of the project. All found the Readers helpful, and agreed that management has been supportive to them. They felt supported by each other, on any occasion when they could meet up, such as the context of the focus group itself: *“Also this, being asked these questions here today, that’s getting us thinking about it. Hearing other people’s input at sessions like this, that’s supportive.”*

They also found support in the actual SURE evaluation itself, finding that it *“gives the feeling that this is being taken seriously.”*

None reported any difficulties in finding the time to attend the training or co-facilitate their group, though one reiterated previously-stated problems with room availability.

All reported their enjoyment of their role as Key Professional. The Key Professionals ranked their enjoyment (on a scale of 0 – 10) as scoring from 7 to 9. (At this stage of the focus group, one member had left, due to time commitments, so only three of the four were present to answer this question.)

The Key Professionals ended their observations by noting that the Reader Project has to date been a remarkable success, and that this is in part due to the fact that the project is strongly supported at senior management level within the Trust:

“This has come in from the top. Most new ideas come in at the bottom and you have to fight all the way up...Management is accepting it, it’s so much easier to do.”

“This programme has been run successfully for some time in other places...There’s a feeling that it’s very accepted, there’s been no hostility. If there is hostility to something, it’s very hard to introduce. This has worked well.”

Overall, the Key Professionals demonstrated great enthusiasm and delight in the Reader Project, and were very happy to witness service users’ enjoyment of literature and the supportive group context. The Key Professionals had overcome some practical and logistical problems, and in some cases weathered some personal anxieties, to reach a level of practical confidence that allowed them to thoroughly enjoy each meeting and look with optimism towards the future of the project.

KEY PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWS AT END OF PILOT

The focus group/interview format is shown in Appendix 10, page 87.

Four Key professionals were interviewed as the project came to an end. They were each asked 11 questions. Their answers are summarised below

What is your understanding now of the Reader in Residence project?

It is an opportunity for as many service users as would like, to get involved in reading in a mutual exploratory way.

It has taken reading into the Day Hospital, to the service users.

It is about enjoying literature, sharing the experience of reading. It brings people together with a shared goal or purpose. It helps people explore lots of different issues that might be relevant for them and for other people around them without it having to be too personal.

How do you now see the role of the Key professional within the project?

To create the environment and a relaxed atmosphere for the group. To keep discussion flowing and ensure group members are listened to and help to draw service users out of themselves. At the outset the Key Professional was responsible for directing and keeping the group on track, while now it is clear the group has begun to take responsibility for itself and develops its own ground rules and ways of working. Another important part of the role is to ensure the room is booked. The Key Professional enables the group to make decisions about what to read. To show that learning is something we all do all the time.

What are you personally gaining from being a Key Professional?

It is quite a privilege to be able to spend time in the week being creative and thinking of things in a different way that is non-essential in terms of a person's actual role in the organisation. It also presents an opportunity to get close to people involved in our services, their experiences are so varied and it also provides meaningful and profound insights into people's lives

It is enjoyable and relaxing, and widens horizons through stories and poetry which are so varied and interesting. It has built up self confidence and self-esteem.

What do you feel service users are gaining from the groups?

At one level, the simple pleasure of using literature again and regaining the skills of concentration and recollection. The members of the group help each other recall the previous week by having a summary of what was read and discussed at that time.

Quieter members have grown in confidence, so that they are now voicing their opinions and preferences. People are seen in a different light and the members are getting to know each other better, learning more about the person.

The shared experience has helped their self esteem and confidence improve. Some service users lack skills in developing goals and achieving something and so for them it is a huge achievement to follow something through to the end, even though there are times when they may just want to give up.

The service users anticipate and look forward to the reading group sessions. It is something they can talk about because they are all involved in it at this one moment in time. More people talking is more healing. They enjoy the discussion and reminiscences and their mood is lifted. They are able to be reflective and make emotional connections with the piece.

It is a distraction from the reasons they attend the Day Hospital and it provides another topic of conversation other than their illness and symptoms. Enjoyment and animation are seen on their faces as their lives change for the hour of the group. As they leave the room, the service users who arrived quietly, depart amid chatter about the text.

Some members find it provides a focus for their day and gives a new dimension to their lives. It has enabled at least one service user to have more meaningful conversations with their relatives because the group and the stories have provided the topics of conversation.

The pleasure of reading a piece even though their eyes may not allow them to see the page clearly.

One Key Professional commented "*Hedonistic appreciation!*"

Do you have any personal concerns or worries about your role at this stage?

The texts of stories and poems can stir up something in service users, like memories or feelings and these can be both good and bad; the readings can be received in different ways. The different situations that can arise can be coped with because of the professional and Reader training which has been received. However, in the group's present location there are fewer members of staff available if assistance was required. A student will be invited to join the group as soon as possible.

One of the Key Professionals is working in a group because reading literature gives them great pleasure, although they are aware that sometimes the role of an individual in the Trust could distance that person's relationship from the group.

Another Key Professional has found it quite difficult to justify taking time out of the week when there are so many other calls on their time. It seems likely that at least one key professional will be unable to get to any sessions in September.

What is maintaining your motivation in the project?

Just seeing that it works! It's brilliant!
Pure joy!

Enjoyment and the way it can widen the experiences of people and is a way of trying to encourage them to do activities that involve other people and thinking about other people.

It is providing benefits to the service users and this results in the motivation being self-generating. Expanding the provision to more service users would be so worthwhile.

The fact that the Reader in Residence project has come into the Trust from the top means that people are working hard to make it a success, and it does work well! The Trust thinks it is worth investing in. This, in turn, lifts people and they get encouraged even more.

If you have needed support in your role, where has this come from?

In every response to this question, when it had been needed, willing support had come from the Reader of the group.

Where do you see your future support needs coming from after the pilot?

It would be really helpful if the newsletter continued and having the contact details of people who could offer support would also be useful.

The present lack of experience about choosing pieces needs support as does the knowledge of how to get materials. These issues could be aided by the group readers and key professionals having occasional meetings to talk about experiences and this would help to maintain a fresh approach and keep the project going. Continuing the contact with the University would also be most beneficial.

Are you having any difficulties finding the time to

- a) attend the training?
- b) Co-facilitate the group?

In general, no difficulties were experienced. This was because the person was well supported by their line manager, they had a fairly flexible timetable or there was a co-facilitator or named deputy in the group.

To what extent have you enjoyed your role as key professional within the project? (0 = not at all, 10 = extremely enjoyable)

The replies were all in the upper levels of 9 and 10.

Any other observations?

- One key professional would like very much to know how the group works, but realises having found out, might lose the group, so the future plan is to just enjoy the experience.
- One unexpected outcome was when one service user was really motivated by a story called 'Doll's House'. She became much more animated and more involved in the group as a result.
- It was felt that the group might be improved if more people were able to attend. At the moment there are 4 regular members. There is an awareness that it could become rather cliquish if the number of attendees stays low.
- The cost of running the Reader group is not known to this Key Professional, but there is a belief that the positive benefits to service users far outweigh the cost of the investment.
- Service users like listening to a story; it is a normal thing to do, like listening to the radio. Many service users say they have got out of the habit of reading books and concentrating. This is a gentle way of re-introducing them to reading.
- With a group who were able to use a computer and the internet, stories could be accessed on-line.
- It is good to know the Trust thinks this project is worth investing in and has put so much effort into finding out if it works. It really is an inspiring and inclusive project.
- With reference to one of the Day Hospital groups, there are now more service users in the group since the reader group meeting day changed to Monday. Another group is being started at the other Day Hospital on a Thursday with the help of a student.
- One member of a group is an accomplished and published poet. The group is very able and it would be a great achievement if more of the work of the group could be published.
- People will engage if they are interested, and they are interested in this group.
- This is combating society's perceptions of people with mental health problems; society often thinks service users are either thick, or must be wrapped in cotton wool and protected from anything to do with suffering, from the news and from texts with sad themes. These are university level texts, and the group members have much more life experience than the average young student.
- This group has doubled in size.

VOLUNTEERS

At the outset of the project, volunteers were recruited and it was anticipated they would play a significant role within the groups. To this end a volunteer policy was formulated by the Reader Organisation that was consistent with the Trust's policy. However, the role of the volunteer has not developed as anticipated and volunteers have not been a major feature of the project to date. There have been pockets of volunteer activity such as at Crown Street and Kevin White, and potentially at Stoddart House, and at a group for dementia sufferers at Mossley Hill, and where this has occurred it has been managed locally.

SUMMARY OF WARD/UNIT MANAGERS OUTSET INTERVIEWS

Due to organisational difficulties, only three managers were interviewed at this stage.

The interview format is shown in Appendix 11, page 88.

It was felt by the interviewees that the Reader in Residence Project would bring reading back to people (service users) and that stories and poetry would be read to them. There would be dedicated time to look at reading so that the service users can see if they understand and enjoy it. It would involve training the staff so that the project could continue beyond the University input. A comment from one ward manager was *"I think it's a brilliant idea!"*

The interviewees were optimistic for the outcomes of the project; they hoped the service users would be stimulated; that they would be encouraged to continue reading; that there would be therapeutic interaction for them; and they would be encouraged to talk about fresh topics of conversation back on the ward. Service users who experienced visual difficulties or who had lost interest due to depression could pick up their interest again. The managers also hoped to observe a change in the service users' behaviour, indicating that they had benefited from attending the group.

None of the managers interviewed anticipated any particular problems although at one inpatient setting, the ward manager was concerned about motivating staff and service users to become involved.

SUMMARY OF WARD/UNIT MANAGERS END INTERVIEWS

The interview format is shown in Appendix 12, page 89.

Three managers were interviewed at this stage of the evaluation and only one of these was interviewed at the outset stage. There are three main reasons for this:

- The relocation of some groups with subsequent managerial changes.
- Some of the managers moving on in post.
- In one instance, the reluctance of the manager to share their views.

In all three instances, the managers were upbeat and optimistic about how the groups were developing. A number of changes have been observed at an individual level such as the development of people's confidence, often in people who are quite ill. The group provided an opportunity for people to voice their own words and share them with others which could be quite cathartic. One manager noted how the service users were now sitting down with one another outside of the group and talking about what they had done within the group. Another manager had particularly observed one gentleman who was perceived as being a 'bit of a loner', now becoming more talkative with other service users. Without exception, the service users looked forward to attending the group each week.

One manager commented how the Reader groups, along with some other initiatives within the service, had contributed to an overall feeling of elevation. Two managers were also pleasantly surprised by the longevity and consistency of the group as this is often hard to achieve in mental health settings.

The manager who at the outset had anticipated some difficulties in motivating staff and service users to attend has not experienced this problem and his concerns have proved unfounded! Service users have fed back to the managers, their enjoyment of the groups and it has been raised as an issue within team meetings. One service is hoping to organise an event at some point, incorporating photography, writing, literature and art.

In terms of wider gains, one manager talked enthusiastically about how the Reader group demonstrates the ability of people with mental health problems to engage with literature. The group is about enlightening people in their ignorance of mental health and dispelling the myth that people with mental health problems are unable to manage and enjoy serious literature.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER INTERVIEWS AT OUTSET OF READER PROJECT

CHERRY TREE DAY HOSPITAL

The interview format is shown in Appendix 13, page 91.

DIRECTORATE:	OLDER PEOPLE (FUNCTIONAL DISORDER)
SERVICE TYPE:	DAY HOSPITAL
NO. OF INTERVIEWEES:	SIX

The period of time the service users had been attending Cherry Tree day hospital ranged from over 12 months to just 3 weeks. Three of the group members had been attending for 5 weeks or less.

When asked why they had chosen to join the Reader group, the responses were wide ranging. 5 interviewees said that they thought the Reader group offered something different for them to do away from the normal routine and that it sounded a nice group to attend.

4 interviewees specified that they used to read a lot, but were unable to now for reasons of failing eyesight or poor concentration.

1 person said that he was looking forward to attending a group activity.

The 6 interviewees were all asked what their expectations were of the Reader group. 3 people said they hoped it would offer them something to do, something to think about and help prevent boredom.

2 interviewees said they specifically hoped it would help their memory and concentration.

The 2 interviewees who had severe visual impairment said that although they could not read, they could listen and were looking forward to this aspect of the group.

Finally 1 person said that they particularly enjoy poetry and was hoping for this from the group.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER END INTERVIEWS

CHERRY TREE DAY HOSPITAL

The interview format is shown in Appendix 14⁷, page 92.

Of the original 6 service users interviewed at the outset, 3 were re interviewed upon leaving the group due to discharge from the Day Hospital and 1 person who was still attending the group was interviewed at the end of the pilot study. The other two service users unfortunately left the Day Hospital suddenly so an exit interview was not practical.

All four service users enjoyed the group and felt the group members got on well or as one gentleman put it... *'group got on smashing!* One person noted how it had really helped her to cope with the loss of her partner 12 months ago.

Everyone felt very well supported within the group. One person commented they felt able to contribute to discussions but did not want to read aloud in front of others.

There weren't many ideas for how the group could be improved, although one person felt 'poetry would stimulate good discussion'. Two people singled the Reader, Mary, out for praise.

When asked the extent to which they felt part of the group, all 4 respondents gave a resounding positive response.

When asked to quantify the extent to which they had found the reading materials helpful, on a scale of 0 (totally unhelpful) to 10 (extremely helpful), the service users awarded 7, 9, 10 and 10 respectively.

The service users were also asked to rate the extent to which they had enjoyed the group, on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely enjoyable). All 4 service users awarded scores of 10.

Service users were asked if there were any particular texts they enjoyed reading. One person said they liked them all! Another said those that went back in time had helped with their memory and one specific text cited was *A Christmas Carol*.

3 of the 4 service users said they would not consider attending a Reader group outside the hospital setting eg at a library or community centre. One service user said they were unsure whether they would or not. Certainly the overall impression was one of reluctance to join an outside group.

An additional comment from one service user was that they would like to see a Reader group set up at the Day Centre in Kirkby to where they were being discharged. Another service user reflected on how disappointed they were

⁷ A 'brief interview format' was introduced for those service users who contributed to the end interviews, but who were not interviewed at the outset. This is shown in Appendix 15, page 94.

that they could no longer attend the Reader group due to their attendance day being moved to a Friday (the Reader group was held on a Monday).

CHERRY TREE DAY HOSPITAL: OBSERVATIONS AND DIARY LOGS

GROUP COMMENCED: October 11th 2007
DURATION OF GROUP: 1 Hour
NO. OF ATTENDEES: 5-7 per session
DIRECTORATE/SERVICE: Older People/Day services
PROFILE OF MEMBERS: Mostly Female

The group members have generated good discussions, sometimes following a slow start to the session. For example, members have talked about pets they have owned in the past and the relationships between children and older people. Members appeared keen to relate the texts to their own experiences, especially those from the past. From an observation point of view this sometimes tinged the group with sadness.

2 members of the group at the outset had severely impaired vision. 1 of these members appeared able to follow the stories well and without difficulty by listening; whilst the other member appeared to struggle. There is a similar contrast with their respective contribution to discussions. The Reader in her diaries also questions how much the second member is comprehending and getting out of the group.

Observations suggest that the group is generally relaxed with few signs of boredom or agitation and few, if any, interruptions. There is positive interaction between the Reader and group members and also directly between group members on occasions.

When the SURE observer returned for the December observation, it was noted that the two original gentlemen had left. Whilst the group discussions were still good, they were a little quieter and less animated than when the gentlemen were members, probably down to the character of the 2 men in question.

Despite the sadness associated with some of the anecdotes, there is generally a cheerful atmosphere with members appearing to thoroughly enjoy the group and leave the room on a positive note.

There was a bit of a 'dip' in the group on the final session before Christmas with a couple of service users appearing somewhat quiet and down. As is always the case, the staff appear to respond sensitively to this and take the matter in hand.

In conclusion the group is developing positively, although the fact this Reader group is apparently going to be time limited (6 weeks) is something which will have to be tested further. Exit interviews with group members will hopefully highlight any issues, either positive or negative, associated with this proposal. At the time of writing however, several of the group members have been attending for more than 6 weeks.

The SURE observer was welcomed warmly to Cherry Tree and the atmosphere at the centre always appears cheerful.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, Cherry Tree Day Hospital transferred to Waterloo Day Hospital where the group would be continued under the facilitation of the Key Professional.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER INTERVIEWS AT OUTSET OF READER PROJECT

CROWN STREET RESOURCE CENTRE

DIRECTORATE:	ADULT MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICE TYPE:	RESOURCE CENTRE
NO. OF INTERVIEWEES:	TWO

Due to the limited number of interviewees, there was minimal data available for this summary.

The period of time the 2 service users had been attending Crown Street was about 6 months.

In terms of why the people chose to join the group, both interviewees had been members of the Crown Street writing group and were keen to try the Reader group.

Regarding expectations, both interviewees said they wanted to keep their 'brains working'. 1 mentioned confidence building and having a hobby whilst the other interviewee said they wanted to meet people, socialise and be happy.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER EXIT INTERVIEWS

CROWN STREET RESOURCE CENTRE

3 service users took part in end interviews, 2 men and one woman. Of these, one man had taken part in the outset interviews. The initial interviewee received the standard end interview; the other 2 received a modified version of this. Both male interviewees were long-term members of the group; the woman had attended for some months.

All 3 were satisfied with the group, and enthusiastic about its benefits. None had any criticism of the group. The woman had been attracted to the group by its *“quiet and gentle”* nature, and found that it lived up to her expectations. Both men, who had joined following their experience of the earlier writing group, were satisfied that the group met their expectations in terms of enjoying company and literature. However, both demonstrated very different interests and motivation from the female member, in that both saw themselves primarily as writers of poetry, and saw the group as a potential audience and/or as a means to improve their creative work. One man’s expectations were that the group would provide *“people to listen and appreciate”* his poetry, and was satisfied that he had achieved this result.

Despite this dissonance in motivation for attending, all felt well supported within the group, and reported an enjoyment of the material read in the group, particularly poetry. Significantly, the man mentioned above enjoyed his own poetry above all. He stated: *“It’s very rewarding to write poetry. It’s a hell of a lot of pleasure to read a poem I’ve created myself. Life is tough with memory problems, and doing poetry is very rewarding.”*

The service user who undertook the more structured end interview rated the helpfulness of the overall reading material at 8 out of 10, and rated the group at 10 out of 10 for enjoyability. He was not keen on considering attending any reading group outside of Crown Street Resource Centre. Having witnessed the development of the group from its earliest days, he was very happy with the progress of the group, particularly with the increased membership (10 on the day of interview). He also felt that the group was well integrated into the resource centre, and that other service users were interested to hear the reading group members discussing their enjoyment of literature.

In terms of the future of the group, and potential improvements, the woman was open-minded and simply happy to see whatever happened next. One of the men suggested that, while the weather was fine, it would be pleasant to hold the group outdoors, in the resource centre grounds. The man who particularly concentrated on writing and performing his own poetry hoped that the group could help him to have his own book of poetry published.

CROWN STREET RESOURCE CENTRE: OBSERVATIONS AND DIARY LOGS

GROUP COMMENCED:	October 11 th 2007
DURATION OF GROUP:	1 hour and 30 minutes
NO. OF ATTENDEES:	5 – 10 per session
DIRECTORATE/SERVICE:	Adult Mental Health/Day Services
PROFILE OF MEMBERS:	Mostly male.

Following some initial difficulties concerning the logistics of the group (the session was originally split into 1 hour of creative writing and 1 hour of Reader Group), Crown Street Reader Group commenced in mid-October 2007. The logistical and practical arrangements for the group are now excellent. The group meets in an appointed room, where they have privacy. All present are offered hot drinks, and there is a break mid-way through the session to accommodate smoking needs as well as general refreshment. The SURE observers were at all times made very welcome in the group, and enjoyed the warm and friendly atmosphere of the group, as well as the centre in general.

Service users were forthright in their evaluations of texts, stating plainly whether they enjoyed the material or not. Poetry is a strong favourite for this group, lending itself well to service users with memory or concentration problems. Despite initial reluctance to read aloud, service users soon became more confident, and it became standard practice to read each poem aloud about three times, with a different member taking the reading role each time. A woman who had been particularly shy expressed her enthusiasm for reading in a group context: *"It's so much more fun when you read in a group, don't you think?"* When the text material was difficult, group members found it helpful to have it broken down line by line. One member commented in the early stages of the project:

"I understand it more now because we've analysed it. Sometimes you need to read a poem a few times over, don't you?"

By this method, the group capably tackles quite complex poetry as well as more simple work. Attentive reading and listening are the norm. There is no whispering or interruption.

Though poetry remains a firm favourite, the group also enjoys occasional short stories, as well as segments from novels or factual books, such as Bill Bryson's travelogue, *Notes From a Small Island*, especially the chapters about Manchester and Merseyside. The group's discussion is generally at its most enthusiastic and vocal when they are moved to reminisce on childhood and on past times in Liverpool. Mansfield's *The Doll's House* triggered detailed reflection on fondly-remembered childhood toys, progressing into deeper reflection on the nature of childhood power dynamics. The group particularly liked Dickens *A Christmas Carol*, insisting on completing the whole novel over a series of several weeks, demonstrating ample ability to concentrate on, and remember, the fast-moving narrative. The detail of Dickens' novel occasioned much reminiscing about Christmas in old Liverpool, as well as quite passionate discussion of human morality and the hope of change and redemption. Blake's *The Schoolboy* unleashed a torrent

of memories of harsh schooldays, brought to a smooth and humorous conclusion by the wittiness of one member.

Overall, the discussion of themes raised in the various texts has included such topics as: relationships, loss, loneliness, current affairs, family, the nature of love, and bringing something good out of negative and painful experiences. In these discussions, the members have shown great human experience, insight and wisdom, as well as deep concern and support for each other. The service users show great respect and attention when a member is speaking of something painful or deeply personal. At other times, and quite appropriately, the members enjoy humour in their discussions. The Reader or volunteer elicit the opinions of less forthcoming service users; these are met with respectful listening by the more vocal. The benefits of these discussions to the group members are encapsulated by one woman's comment: *"Doctors and stuff aren't always what you need. Other people can help too."*

The very few instances of inappropriate comments were smoothly managed by the Reader or Key Professional. For example, a male service user misquoted a line of poetry in an extremely suggestive manner, directing it towards a young, female volunteer attending for the first time. The Key Professional firmly told him, *"Don't go there"*, and the service user accepted this proper imposition of a boundary.

The group experienced some disruption from one of its members, who saw the group chiefly as an audience for his own poetry. Finding it impossible to listen to reading, due to his severe memory problems, this service user did not attend the group in the same manner as the other members, but entered the room periodically during each session, offering to read his work. Initially, these interruptions caused some irritation to some other members. The problem has been superbly handled by the Reader and Key Professional, who gently but firmly set some boundaries. They incorporate the member's creativity into the group, allowing him to read at set times. The members enjoy his poetry in small, controlled amounts. He has emphasised that his participation in the group has brought him confidence and enjoyment.

The sessions always end on a positive note, and with an overall pleasant and calm feeling. A typical parting comment from a service user was *"Thanks, I really enjoyed that. The story was good."* Service users leave in a quiet, reflective, positive mood, and head to the adjoining dining room, where they join their fellow service users for lunch.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER INTERVIEWS AT OUTSET OF READER PROJECT

MOSSLEY HILL HOSPITAL

DIRECTORATE:	OLDER PEOPLE
SERVICE TYPE:	IN-PATIENT
No of INTERVIEWEES:	EIGHT

The service users had been inpatients for between 2 weeks and 5 months. Two of the group had attended for 4 weeks or less while 2 service users had difficulty remembering how long they had been on the ward.

When asked why they had come to the reader group, the majority (5) of service users replied that they were interested in reading, 3 liked poetry, and 1 enjoyed English. Other responses were that they wanted to be with friends (1) or wanted something else to do instead of watching the television (1) and to be off the ward (1).

Expectations of the reader group were varied and included:

- Reminding the service user of English at school
- That it would be very interesting (2)
- It would be better than sitting on the ward
- It would take the interviewee's mind off her problems and help her concentration
- New things would be learnt
- New friends made
- Being an interest for the service user.
- One person cherished the idea of getting pleasure from doing something normal.
- One interviewee had no expectations at all

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER INTERVIEWS AT END OF READER PROJECT

MOSSLEY HILL - SYCAMORE DAY HOSPITAL

NOTE: Originally, 8 service users attended the group as inpatients on Oak Ward at Mossley Hill. A number of changes have occurred to the group during the year and as the pilot study comes to an end, it is now run in the Sycamore Day Hospital for day patients. As a result, it was not possible to interview the original 8 service users but the views of 4 service users attending the Day Hospital were obtained.

All the service users enjoyed the group. They found it relaxing and interesting to hear stories and poems read aloud. One service user had come to the group at first to see what it was like and had then stayed because they liked it so much. Another service user who was not an avid reader now takes the trouble to read, whereas before, the inclination to read had not been there.

At the outset, the group was led by a Reader (Katie Peters), but as the pilot study progressed, the Key Professional in the group took over the role of reader. Like the Reader, this individual was well liked by the group and was an inspiration to them all to get involved and enjoy themselves.

Everyone interviewed was pleased to be in the group, although there had been feelings of nervousness and possible embarrassment at the start. One service user had suggested to another that the person should join the group and the new service user was very glad that the suggestion had been made as she enjoyed it so much.

The service users felt relaxed and able to get to know each other in the group. Everyone was so friendly and they enjoyed their reminiscences.

"I remember the hardware shop in Smithdown Road, the people were friendly, just like here. It's not like that anymore."

One person said that they would be bored without it, while another commented that the walk to the room was beneficial, too.

One service user reported feeling less depressed while another felt part of the group rather than being on the sidelines. It gave the service users a diversion and stopped them thinking of their concerns and worries.

"I don't think it's true that it (a rainbow) gets less special as you grow. Just last week I was having a low day and I saw a rainbow out of my window, stretching right out over where I live, and it cheered me up no end."

When asked how they would grade their enjoyment of the group, the response was a unanimous 10/10.

The reading material used was also rated and gained 8/10. The service users had found that they enjoyed stories and poems which were exciting or brought back memories for them.

“She didn’t really need those shoes in the end. It was worth it for the fun they had.” (Faith and Hope go Shopping)

When asked if they would attend a group outside the day hospital, all replied that they would because they had enjoyed it so much.

MOSSLEY HILL SYCAMORE DAY HOSPITAL: OBSERVATIONS AND DIARY LOGS

GROUP COMMENCED	9 TH October 2007
DURATION OF GROUP	1 hour
NUMBER OF ATTENDEES	4-8 per session
DIRECTORATE	Older Peoples mental Health
PROFILE OF MEMBERS	Mixed, mainly female

The Reader in Residence group at Mossley Hill Hospital began in October 2007 and was made up of in-patient service users from Oak Ward. Since October there have been a number of changes made at Mossley Hill, involving building work, the relocation of the reading group and finally the reconstitution of the group. Oak Ward and the Sycamore Day Hospital units have merged and now occupy the rooms of the Sycamore Day Hospital. Whereas previously the group consisted of only in-patient service users, it is now made up solely of day hospital service users. Service users have a range of functional mental health problems.

The movement of the group's location and the change in the make up of the group have meant that there has been a state of flux for quite some time. In addition, the original Reader, Katie Peters, handed her role over to the Key Professional at the end of April 2008. It might have been expected that such changes would deter some participants from attending the group, but this has not been the case. The group has continued to flourish under the guiding hand of its new reader who has organised and facilitated the group fantastically, despite disruptions to the make up of the group and a move of location.

The group attracts a good number of patients on a regular basis. The group members are mainly female but occasionally one or two men are present. The mood at the start of the sessions is relaxed and anticipatory, with the group members being expectant and looking forward to the session. The group has a comfortable feel, and relationships have been built up through discussion of the material being read. Thanks to the commitment of the facilitator, the group is very well organised and informed and, at each session, most, if not all, the service users contribute their comments. The quality of facilitation has been second to none, enabling the service users to reflect and reminisce, describing their experiences to the rest of the group. This has led to further discussions between service users about the Red Cross and working as a team.

At the start of the Reader project, people in the group were reluctant to speak and seemed withdrawn and nervous but as time has progressed, and as there is now a regular group of attendees, everyone is comfortable in the group and very welcoming to new group members. There is a relaxed atmosphere and lots of discussion. Individuals are much more willing to comment and to open up and talk about their personal experiences. One lady who hadn't spoken at all for the first four weeks went on to tell the group about her time living in London and going on an adventure to France with a friend when she was in her twenties. In general, too, as a group, people talk more to each other. Instead of silence when everyone walks in to the reading group room, people

are chatting, asking how the other is. Sometimes it is difficult getting them to quieten down!

The classic problem of one very talkative person in a group of quieter individuals has arisen and has been very ably managed by the Reader and facilitator who ensured that lots of questions were asked to quieter members of the group and by using eye contact with them to engage and encourage them to speak.

The group is very open minded and willing to give anything a try and so choosing materials for them to read has not been difficult. Topics like, but not restricted to; the blitz, war, children, siblings, stockings and clothes all brought comments, discussion and reflection about memories of youth/childhood, old neighbourhood communities and shops. They love being read to and as they listen to the stories, quickly become engrossed in them. They particularly enjoyed the long short story by Hardy *The Melancholy Hussar of the German Legion* and a short story called *Faith and Hope go Shopping* about two women who escape from their nursing home to have an adventure in London. They liked it when the story had a happy ending – but most importantly they liked stories with very strong, clear characterisation and got attached to characters very quickly. Discussions have ranged from memories of old fashioned hardware shops to the idea of sharing your grief and communicating with others. Two service users were able to empathise with a character in a story who was the victim of a break-in. They told the group of their own experience of break-ins.

Members of the group have been able to think about the characters in the stories and poems and, sometimes, identify with them. Laughter and excitement have not been lacking, either, as the stories chosen have been many and varied.

As confidence in the group, the Reader and the members has grown, some service users who had good sight, started to read some of the story or poem to the rest of the group. This is seen as a very positive development in such a short space of time.

On one occasion, the group was small and for various reasons the members were feeling low. The story (*The Model Millionaire by Oscar Wilde*) was interesting and had a good momentum. It was light and each member became immersed in the story, forgetting their original feelings for a while.

During the evaluation of the Pilot of the Reader in Residence, the rooms used have provided excellent levels of privacy for the group. Even during the change over between locations, the staff have made every effort to maintain the comfort of the group. There has always been tea or coffee and biscuits made available to everyone and many have availed themselves of the refreshments.

The observer of this group has always been made to feel most welcome and has become accepted as part of the group.

WINDSOR HOUSE: OBSERVATIONS AND DIARY LOGS

GROUP COMMENCED:	September 13 th 2007
DURATION OF GROUP:	1 hour
NO. OF ATTENDEES:	1 – 6 per session
DIRECTORATE:	Adult Mental Health/ In-patient
PROFILE OF MEMBERS:	Varies week to week

The Windsor House group takes place within a challenging context. The location is an extremely busy, acute in-patient unit, where space and staff time are at a premium, and patients are generally in a distressed, acutely ill condition. Many patients do not speak fluent English. Patients are frequently agitated, or extremely tired and drowsy due to medication. Much of the success of this group has been due to its adaptation to the particular nature of the setting and its accommodation of service users' needs and levels of ill health.

After some early problems with room availability, the session settled into a rescheduled afternoon event with agreed room availability. The venue was a pleasant, spacious room with good natural lighting and comfortable couches and armchairs. Members were always offered a hot drink. The SURE observer noted a level of disinterest to the project by senior management of the unit, and experienced a degree of hostility and obstruction in her research from a member of staff involved in the group. The Reader and volunteer, however, were very welcoming and supportive of SURE's evaluation.

Due to the acute levels of illness among patients, the size of the group has been very variable. The sort of stable attendance customary in other locations has not been feasible here. The session proceeded as long as there was even one service user present; on a number of occasions, when no service user felt able or inclined to attend, the session did not take place. Attendance has been greatly helped by the proactive volunteer, who goes around the unit reminding patients of the session and inviting them along, thus supporting service users with memory problems or low confidence. There have been frequent interruptions, as acutely ill patients sometimes enter the room; for instance, a male patient entered the room weekly to announce that he was due to be discharged. Other interruptions were by nursing staff obliged to make checks on patients under periodic observation. In addition, service users often had to leave the group to take medication, to meet staff or to meet visitors. All such interruptions were smoothly handled by the Reader and volunteer, and did not appear to bother the group members.

The impaired concentration of service users was accommodated by the copious use of short poems. Short stories are also a favourite, and the group has successfully tackled *A Christmas Carol* and *Of Mice and Men*. The Reader noted that, even though many service users struggle to understand English, there is generally a degree of understanding, and acknowledged enjoyment. To enhance their enjoyment, the Reader often selected texts with a cultural background reflecting the service users' culture. For example, the Chinese novel *Monkey* was chosen to enhance the enjoyment of a Chinese group member.

Group members often preferred to listen than to read aloud. Commenting on his enjoyment of being read to, a service user commented: “*Forget Steven Fry reading Harry Potter!*” Some fell asleep during the reading due to the effects of their medication, which was accepted by the Reader and by fellow members. Service users who were more agitated occasionally became inadvertently disruptive, commenting loudly and continuously during the reading, or speaking of personal matters. The Reader or volunteer gently but firmly reminded them that others were listening to the reading. The verbose members then generally became quieter or left. Apart from these issues, service users generally listened quietly and with every appearance of attention.

Discussions were variable, depending greatly on the wellbeing and understanding of service users present. As often as not, there were fewer members present by the time discussions started. Service users who were particularly drowsy or whose first language was not English generally simply indicated that they had enjoyed the reading and were happy to listen, though on occasion, like all other members, would indicate clearly if they had disliked a text. Other service users generally commented on the overall atmosphere and language of texts, and discerned the motivation and feelings of the characters. This was done with sensitivity and a degree of identifying with characters.

A few younger service users commented at a very complex level on philosophy, history, art and literary style. These comments led to enthusiastic and mutually respectful discussions with peers whenever other service users of similar wellbeing and intellectual interests were present. For example, a comical reference in Alan Bennett’s novel *The Uncommon Reader* to the artist David Hockney inspired an enthusiastic conversation about art, as well as a discussion about the work of Alan Bennett in general. During discussions, the service users spoke one at a time, and listened respectfully to each other.

The atmosphere at the end of each group was peaceful and pleasant. Service users left looking calm and composed. A satisfied service user commented at the end of a session, following a lively discussion about the novel *Little Women*: “*I really enjoyed that!*” The group seems to function as a haven of peace and calm amidst a loud, chaotic hospital background.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER INTERVIEWS AT OUTSET OF READER PROJECT

RUSKIN WARD

DIRECTORATE:	HIGH SECURE SERVICES
SERVICE TYPE:	WARD BASED
NO. OF INTERVIEWEES:	THREE

Two of the service users interviewed have been attending since the start of the project in February and the third started one week later.

When asked why they had chosen to join the reading group one service user remarked that it was just to see what it was all about. He had no set ideas and was keeping an open mind. Another said that he was interested in reading and reads his own books. He liked the fact that the group reading material and authors were different from the type he normally reads. He usually reads biographies and books about World War 1. He likes non fiction. The third service user said joined because he thought it would be interesting to read stories.

When asked what they were expecting from the group one service user said he was expecting different viewpoints from the participants, more understanding of the books and hearing other opinions not just his own. He remarked that he has been learning how to pronounce words and their meaning. Another said he was looking forward to reading different books, passages of books and poetry. He wanted to find out about different authors and have a big choice of reading. The third said he joined to have a quiet time and to read some interesting stories.

SUMMARY OF SERVICE USER INTERVIEWS AT END OF READER PROJECT

RUSKIN WARD

When the evaluation came to an end two service users were interviewed. The third service user who was interviewed at the outset has dropped out of the group. A fourth member did not want to be interviewed.

When asked what changes have taken place in the group one service user remarked that in the beginning people were wandering in and out but as time has gone by the people dedicated to reading "*have stayed with it*". The other service user said the changes he found were that he felt more able to read aloud which he previously did not find easy as it shows vulnerability. He has gained confidence, learned from other people and learned how to pronounce words.

When asked how supported they felt in the group one service user remarked that there was no pressure and that if you don't want to read you can just listen. They read a few pages each and see how things go. He reinforced the fact that he now has the confidence to speak in front of others. The other service user said he felt well supported and if he has trouble in reading he has help from others in the group.

When asked if there was any way the group could be improved they both said not. One remarked that he was quite comfortable with the way things have gone.

When asked to what extent they felt part of the group one said that they are a unit, there to learn and if someone is struggling they are given a chance and then someone will step in to help. The other said that there is a good chain in the reading and good enthusiasm. Everyone is interested in their part and it flows.

When asked to quantify the extent to which they had found the reading material helpful on a scale of 0 (totally unhelpful) to 10 (extremely enjoyable) one gave a score of 5 and the other a score of 8.

They were also asked to rate the extent to which they have enjoyed the group on a scale of 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely enjoyable) both awarded scores of 10.

When asked if there was any particular text they enjoyed reading they both chose an Alan Bennett story. One said because it is humorous and the other remarked that it was more straight forward. One of them said that *Wuthering Heights* is proving to be more of a challenge he said "*you need a dictionary to read it*".

When asked if they intended to continue with the group one remarked that he is a self taught reader and would like to continue as anything to do with reading or writing is helpful. The other said he will continue to attend and hopes that more people will become involved.

RUSKIN WARD: OBSERVATIONS

GROUP COMMENCED:	8 th February 2008
DURATION OF GROUP:	1 hour
NO. OF ATTENDEES:	3-4 per session
DIRECTORATE:	High Secure Services
PROFILE OF MEMBERS:	All male

This ward based group is a newcomer to the project. The first meeting was facilitated by one of the professional Readers with a view to the Medical Director of Mersey Care taking over as Reader. This take-over happened at the fourth meeting at the end of February. It was agreed that one of the Key Professionals would act as co-facilitator to ensure continuity. In the middle of March the group had to discontinue for four weeks because of some work being carried out on the ward and because of the Easter Break. When the group started up again the service users commented that they were glad that things were getting back to normal.

The group started with two service users attending and half way through the session a third service user joined the group. After a few weeks a fourth service user joined and from that point there has been three service users at each session with a fourth attending sometimes for only part of the session and sometimes not at all. Apparently this is due to his mental stability on the day rather than reluctance to attend. There are two Key Professionals in the group. Sometimes ward staff attend, including the Ward Manager.

The service users have all expressed a great interest in reading and have brought poems and other reading material to the group. The first few sessions were spent reading a poem followed by a short story. All the reading material has brought on some lively conversation and very varied and interesting views. Everyone plays an active part without any one being over dominant.

The group has now moved on to reading books. Everyone reads out a few pages in turn and then there are breaks for discussion. One book was very amusing and there was much laughter. The text in the book being presently read is quite challenging and has led to a lot of lively debate which makes for good interaction between everyone.

The group is very well run and everyone is treated as an equal. The observer has been included as part of the group and has taken a turn at reading. One group member suffers from a form of dyslexia and sometimes struggles with reading. Although it was made clear from the start that reading is optional he feels that it benefits him to read. The group is very patient and decided that only the person next to him will quietly prompt and this seems to be working well.

The group is now reading *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte which one member describes as "*hard going*". During the reading there has been a lot of discussion about the meaning of certain words in the text and everyone at some stage has faltered over the pronunciation of some words which are written in "Olde English style" and are not familiar to anyone. The fact that everyone has struggled is a good leveller. The group is now halfway through

the book and say they are determined to see it to the end. Everyone has joined in the discussions and put forward their interpretations of the book and its characters so far.

For the last few weeks the group has been attended by three service users. The fourth service user, who attended infrequently, has dropped out.

The observer has always been made very welcome by the group and has been made to feel a part of the group rather than part of the research. This is a very happy and friendly group. The service users involved are very dedicated to reading.

SUMMARY OF NON-EVALUATED GROUPS

The purpose of this section is to reflect on the progress being made with other Reader groups across Mersey Care but which did not form part of the formal evaluation. The accounts have been written by the Readers in Residence, Mary and Katie and are intended to supplement the formal evaluation by giving a flavour of the issues which have arisen within these groups.

Kevin White Unit (Katie Peters)

The reading group at the Kevin White Unit has been meeting since 10th January 2008. Despite a very high turnover rate (most clients are at the unit for a maximum of 4 weeks only) there are regularly at least 5 group members. On a couple of occasions the group has been held outside in the garden and have had 10 group members! The group is popular with clients and a word of mouth method ensures that new clients coming into the centre hear about it and are interested. The Reader also found that spending some time at the centre just before the group, talking to clients and explaining what happens in the group draws people in. In the groups themselves, people are very talkative and listen well to the stories in particular. Many people are more sceptical about the poems, but once they've read them a couple of times they lead to good discussions. The Key Professional is very passionate about the group and its importance to clients. He has attended a training session and is keen to continue supporting the group. A student volunteer has visited the group and will become a permanent volunteer, assisting the Key Professional from September 2008. The main problem that faces the group at Kevin White is the potential to lose the sense of continuity as occasionally there will be a week where many clients are at a low stage of the detox and feel unable to attend and the group cannot run. But there is a wonderful thing happening in the sessions here and overall, this is a very positive and lively group.

Olive Mount (Katie Peters)

The Reader struggled with a few big problems at Olive Mount. Firstly, staff did not feel that a group would work at the centre and the Reader was encouraged to do one to one sessions instead. She began one to ones with a lady called B, but found that the Key Professional was rarely around as she was off sick most weeks. This meant that the Reader was leading sessions alone and no-one was being trained to take over. B was then moved from Olive Mount to a house in Mossley Hill. As she really enjoys the sessions, in which they read poems and *The BFG*, it was decided that the Reader should continue the sessions at her new house. She now has a session with B every Monday, which she thoroughly enjoys. B remembers details from the story well and enjoys looking at pictures with the Reader. The Reader thinks it is a shame that a group was never formed at Olive Mount, but the support from staff there was not available and this illustrates how important that internal support is to the success of the project.

Stoddart House (Katie Peters)

At the time of writing, there had been three sessions at Stoddart House, each with 5-6 attendees, meeting on Wednesday afternoons. The group receives fabulous support from the OT who is training as the Key Professional, and this shows in that the group has been able to get up and running straight away. The OT advertises the group well with posters and by talking to patients about it. She invites people each week and there are already two regular attendees who are very positive about the group. People enjoy the stories very much and like to think and talk about them together. There is a great sense with the group of sharing something important and people listen well to each other and seem genuinely interested in what others have to say. People have talked a lot about their past, from childhood, to old jobs, to family and adventures on holiday. In terms of problems, there have not been any so far. The ward has a high turnover rate and it is yet to be seen how this will affect the group, but the Reader believes that this group will be stable and well organised due to OT's support and commitment to it. The Reader hopes to place a volunteer with the group in future when she has a date for handing over to the OT, so that she has support to run the group well and so that momentum is kept up.

Ashworth Therapy Suite group (Katie Peters)

The Ashworth group started meeting on 8th January and the first couple of sessions were attended by a SURE member. Initially the group had two members, this dropped to one in April when the other member was moved to another hospital. The Reader is currently in the process of looking at ways of attracting more people to this group and has great support from the OT and Therapy Suite Co-ordinator. The group has gone on without the OT for the last couple of months as she has been involved in a drama project. This ends at the end of June and she is keen to get back to the reading group. The patient who now attends each week very much values the group. The Reader and the patient have read lots of short stories and are currently reading "*Goodnight Mr Tom*" in chunks, along with poetry, which he also likes very much. Staff that have attended the group comment on the way he presents within the group and the contrast with how he is at other times. They have great discussions about the different things that they read together, and in this group, perhaps more than any other, the Reader has seen the relationship between staff and patients work really well. The Key Professionals are keen to continue the group for him and to work on getting more people along. The same OT is also due to start another weekly reading group on Tennyson ward and is meeting with the Reader to discuss this.

Broadoak (Mary Weston)

This group commenced in October 2007 and was handed over to the Key Professional, an OT, in May 2008.

This group presents a contrast to Windsor House. The layout of the building, with the OT rooms off the wards, means that service users have to be escorted to the group, making it more formal, and more of a commitment than the relaxed 'drop-in' atmosphere of Windsor House.

Attendance has been quite high, and more consistent than at Windsor House, though as an acute setting, it does have a certain amount of coming and going. Particular service users who enjoy it will tend to come every week until they are discharged, with others drifting in and out. In some ways this creates a challenge for the facilitator, at least in terms of finding texts - it's too short term to embark on a novel, but hard to keep finding new short stories every week.

The commitment of members suggests the group is a success, but it was often hard to get discussion going. Perhaps the nature of a 'book' group attracted the quieter or introverted types. The 'formality' of the setting may also have made things a little more solemn. Nevertheless the group did have some good discussions, and some lively sessions when the vibe was right!

The OT seems to be doing good work with the group, and is looking to use humour to try to lighten and liven things up a bit.

LSU (Mary Weston)

This group has only been running a short while, but has been doing better than expected. There have been a minimum of 3 attendees for each session, and two who have come for every session, one who has been returning since he came. Pretty good for an all male setting!

The group feels relaxed, somewhat livelier than Broadoak in general, probably due to personalities, though the Reader thinks it also testifies to positive relationships between staff and service users, given the secure setting. The group has been reading *Of Mice and Men*, and it is really gripping people's imaginations. One service user commented "*I must get back into reading. Last book I read was Enid Blyton!*"

Scott Clinic (Mary Weston)

Running only slightly longer than LSU, this group has a different feel to it. Each session has had 3 attendees, and there are a total of 4 people who have come, two men and two women. The proportion of professionals to service users is very high - 2 to 1! Most of the OT staff take part naturally, just chipping in when and where they have something to say, sometimes the escorts do too (the Reader always try to include them). One OT is very good with literary things and the Reader hopes she will keep up her role in the

group. Two of the service users are very quiet. One is quite vocal, and the Reader was told she has a history of rather dominating groups. The Reader hasn't found her particularly difficult in this one, and staff concede she is less dominating than usual. The group has been doing *Of Mice and Men* again, supplemented with poetry.

The amount of knowledge the OT's have about the service users, their willingness to share it with the Reader, and the tendency to try to integrate the group into the general therapeutic goals they have for service users is much greater in this group than any other experienced. It could be the secure setting, or again, the number of staff involved. It raises some questions in relation to the place of the reading group within the service in general - are the groups going to be subsumed into Occupational Therapy, or are they a separate activity with its own boundaries and professionalism?

Moss House (Mary Weston & Alan Yates)

This is the group that most resembles a classic Get into Reading community group. Five members, who come regularly, if not every session, and a relaxed, convivial atmosphere. The group is starting its third book and has read some genuinely difficult poetry, including Gerard Manley Hopkins and Emily Dickinson. The group meets at a local church hall.

The participative leadership style is especially refreshing and something the Reader hopes she can find a way of communicating to other Key Professionals.

Although the Reader has encountered only a few occasions where she has found Mersey Care staff to be patronising or heavy handed with service users, she sometimes has the feeling that their caring and concern not to let people get upset does slightly hamper the freedom of sessions, and there is, she thinks, an underlying power imbalance just simply built into the situation of hospitals, acute as well as secure.

CONCLUSIONS: Thoughts, Themes and Threads

The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow that seemed hard frozen; may it happen for you.

Sheenagh Pugh: "Sometimes"

The purpose of this section is to summarise some of the main points which have arisen from the evaluation. It reflects the thoughts of the SURE evaluators and is intended to prompt some food for thought re the Reader project.

- The evaluation demonstrates the clear and tangible benefits of Reader groups to service users across all settings. For example, service users not only talk to each other and staff more, but their topics of conversation include issues other than their illness. It has also enabled some people to have meaningful discussions with their families. Service users practice skills such as listening and concentration and they report gains in terms of confidence and self esteem. All this takes place within a comfortable and safe environment.
- The findings of this evaluation strongly support the development of new groups and continued support of existing groups. Consideration may wish to be given to re-visiting specific service settings such as learning disabilities where groups have not evolved, although individual sessions have.
- A model that has worked particularly well is where there has been a named group facilitator/Reader plus a named deputy. For example Moss House and Ruskin ward have worked with this system and it helps ensure the continuity of the group in the event of the first Reader being unable to facilitate the group.
- Without exception the two Readers, Mary and Katie, have undertaken their role skilfully and have shown great ability to adapt to varying challenges and service user needs. The evaluation pilot sites incorporated Adult Mental Health, Older Peoples Services, High Secure Services, in-patient and day service settings. Both Readers showed great versatility and leadership and this also appears to have been the case in the non-evaluated sites.
- The question has to be asked, 'where does the Reader group sit?' Is it part of the OT range of services or is it an activity in its own right with its own boundaries and professionalism?
- Thought could be given to the structure and regularity of training such as: group facilitation skills; the purpose of Reader groups; and how to access appropriate literature. Training could be set up prior to the groups becoming established and then on a regular basis and the two Readers are keen on this.

- Securing a level of commitment from managers at ward/unit level is fundamental to the success of the project. This may be supported by the Executive Team sending out positive messages about the importance and benefits of the Reader groups to service users. Senior managers need to be aware of its ethos for this to happen and the evaluation suggests this knowledge and awareness is patchy across those senior managers who formed part of the evaluation.
- At one location, senior medics have become involved in a group, and at another, the Chief Executive, thereby setting a positive example and acting as role models to other staff. One Key Professional also commented *“Seeing clinicians in the group helps to develop collaborative working.”*
- Although limited in amount, where ward/unit managers did offer feedback, it suggests that service users are discussing topics amongst themselves outside of the group setting and engaging more with staff.
- Key Professionals report gains in terms of self confidence and professional development, demonstrating that the project not only benefits service users.
- The Reader group demonstrates the ability and capability of service users to engage meaningfully with complex literature. Also, their ability to cope with the range of emotional responses that the texts have elicited.
- Service users have shown great adaptability when new members have joined the group or people have left. On the whole, such movement and activity does not appear to have interrupted the dynamic of the group.
- The groups have helped service users to engage with the ethos of the European Capital of Culture 2008.
- Mersey Care Trust is to be lauded in its commitment to such a ground breaking and bold initiative.
- The evaluation has had a spin off benefit in that it has helped improve the confidence and well being of SURE evaluators. It also helped breath new life into their interest in literature.
- SURE evaluators have experienced a range of co-operation in undertaking the evaluation. Most sites have shown great enthusiasm and co-operation, whereas one site in particular showed a somewhat indifferent and even obstructive attitude towards the evaluation. On the whole, the SURE members found the evaluation an enjoyable and interesting experience and were made to feel welcome by the Readers and the groups.
- The Project group may wish to re-visit the role of service users and carers as volunteers and indeed the role of the volunteer generally within the project. One option is that the role is allowed to develop organically where local interest arises. Consideration must also be given to the

volunteer policy. Should the volunteer assume the role of co-facilitator, then it is suggested this be a more formal arrangement as it then impacts upon the continuity of the group (see above).

- A practical suggestion is the development of a regular news bulletin for all the Readers and Key Professionals. This could include details such as suggested reading materials, up to date contact details of Key Professionals and a feature of how the groups are progressing.

At the outset, this evaluation set out to identify the extent to which the Reader project was having an impact upon the:

- The therapeutic benefit to the individual in terms of their health and well being, for example as seen by improved mood, appetite or communication.
- The social and cultural change in the environment, for example the day hospital or ward.

The report concludes that there has been unquestionable benefit to the service users who have participated in Reader groups across a range of service settings. Improvements in confidence, memory, concentration, creativity, listening skills are just a few of the many positive outcomes reported.

There is also emerging evidence that the groups are creating spin off benefits on the ward or unit. Service users are expanding their range of conversation outside the groups, one service area has reported an 'elevated' mood and some people are engaging more with staff and their families thus breaking down barriers.

It should also be recognised that unexpected benefits have emerged, in particular the joy and satisfaction that staff are gaining from being involved in the groups.

One senior manager talked about wanting to know what the secret, magical ingredient of the Reader group is. He concluded however, that it was perhaps best not to search too hard, as, if it is found, it could be lost. Better to just enjoy the moment!

Reading Group Record Sheet (Diary logs)

Date:

Time:

Place:

Attendance:

- Numbers -
- Patients
Males __2__ Females __3__
- Volunteers –

Texts Used:

Your Comments on Texts Used

Positive Outcomes:

Any Difficulties:

Reader semi structured interviews (outset)

READER: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. What are your hopes and expectations for the groups?

2. Do you anticipate any problems?
If so, what?

3. Do you have any concerns or anxieties about how the group may run?

4. Do you feel there has been sufficient preparation work with MCT for getting the project up and running?

Reader semi structured interviews (mid)

READER: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. To what extent are your hopes and expectations being achieved?

2. Are your anticipated problems materialising?
If so, how are you dealing with these?

3. Have there been any unexpected outcomes so far (good or bad)?

4. In hindsight, do you feel the preparation and ongoing work with MCT is
enabling the group to run effectively?
What could have been/can still be done differently?

5. What are your impressions as to how the reading groups are developing?
If/how individuals are progressing
Cultural/social change

6. To what extent are you enjoying facilitating the group?
(0 = not at all 10 = extremely enjoyable)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. How easy is it to select appropriate reading materials for the groups?

8. Are there particular texts which are proving more successful than others for specific groups?

9. What contributions are the volunteers making to the group?

10. What contributions are the key professionals making to the group?

11. Is there any way you feel the group could be improved?
If so, how?

12. What hopes do you have for the future of the groups?

13. Do you have any concerns for the future of the groups?

Reader semi structured interviews (End)

READER: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. To what extent were your hopes and expectations achieved?

2. Did your anticipated problems materialise?
If so, how did you deal with these?

3. Were there any unexpected outcomes (good or bad)?

4. In hindsight, do you feel the preparation and ongoing work with MCT
enabled the group to run effectively?
What could have been done differently?

5. What are your impressions as to how the reading groups have
developed?

If/how individuals have progressed
Cultural/social change

6. To what extent have you enjoyed facilitating the group?
(0 = not at all 10 = extremely enjoyable)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. How easy was it to select appropriate reading materials for the groups?

8. Were there particular texts which proved more successful than others for specific groups?

9. What contributions did the volunteers make to the group?

10. What contributions did the key professionals make to the group?

11. Is there any way you feel the group could be improved?
If so, how?

12. What hopes do you have for the future of the groups?

13. Do you have any concerns for the future of the groups?

Exec Team semi structured interviews (outset)

EXEC NAME: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. What is your understanding of the Reader in Residence project?

2. What outcomes are you hoping for from the project?

3. Do you anticipate any problems?
If so, what?

4. Are you personally involved in the Reader in Residence project?
If so, in what capacity?

If personally involved in the project...

7. To what extent have you enjoyed your involvement with the project?
(0 = not at all 10 = extremely enjoyable)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. What are your impressions as to how the reading group has developed?
If/how individuals have progressed?
Cultural/social change

9. Are there any ways you feel the group could be improved?
If so, how?

Key professionals focus group (outset)

DATE OF GROUP: _____

FACILITATORS: _____

1. What is your understanding of the Reader in Residence project?
2. How do you see the role of the key professional within the project?
3. What are you personally hoping to gain from becoming a key professional?
4. What are you hoping service users will gain from the groups?
5. Do you have any personal concerns or worries about your role at this stage?
6. What motivated you to become involved in the project?
7. If you need support in your role, were do you anticipate this coming from?
8. Do you anticipate having any difficulties in finding the time to:
attending the training
facilitating the group

Key professionals focus group (mid)

DATE OF GROUP: _____

FACILITATORS: _____

1. What is your understanding now of the Reader in Residence project?
2. How do you now see the role of the key professional within the project?
3. What are you personally gaining from being a key professional?
4. What do you feel service users are gaining from the groups?
5. Do you have any personal concerns or worries about your role at this stage?
6. What is maintaining your motivation in the project?
7. If you have needed support in your role, where has this come from?
8. Are you having any difficulties in finding the time to:
 - a) attend the training
 - b) Co facilitate the group
9. To what extent are you enjoying your role as a Key professional within the project?
(0 = not at all 10 = extremely enjoyable)
10. Any other observations?

Key professionals focus group (end)

DATE OF GROUP: _____

FACILITATORS: _____

1. What is your understanding now of the Reader in Residence project?
2. How do you now see the role of the key professional within the project?
3. What are you personally gaining from being a key professional?
4. What do you feel service users are gaining from the groups?
5. Do you have any personal concerns or worries about your role at this stage?
6. What is maintaining your motivation in the project?
7. If you have needed support in your role, where has this come from?
8. Where do you see your future support needs coming from after the pilot?
9. Are you having any difficulties in finding the time to:
 - a) attend the training
 - b) co facilitate the group
10. To what extent have you enjoyed your role as a key professional within the project?
(0 = not at all 10 = extremely enjoyable)
11. Any other observations?

Ward/unit/day hospital semi structured interviews (outset)

MANAGER NAME: _____

READER GROUP: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. What is your understanding of the Reader in Residence project?

2. What outcomes are you hoping for from the project?

3. Do you anticipate any problems?
If so, what?

Ward/unit/day hospital semi structured interviews (end)

MANAGER NAME: _____

READER GROUP: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. Did the project live up to your expectations?

2. You were hoping for outcomes a, b & c. To what extent were these achieved?

3. Were there any unexpected outcomes?

4. Did you observe or experience any problems with the project?

5. Have you observed any changes?
Individual progress/development

Culture/social change

6. Have you received any feedback about the project?
From whom?
What was it?

7. Would you like to see the Reader in Residence project continue?

Service user semi structured interviews (outset)

SERVICE USER NAME: _____

READER GROUP: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. Why have you chosen to join the reading group?

1. How long have you been attending the ward/unit/day hospital?

2. What are you expecting from the group?

Service user semi structured interviews (end)

SERVICE USER NAME: _____

READER GROUP: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

1. What are your reasons for leaving the group?

2. What, if any, changes have taken place

- For you individually?
- For the group as a whole?
- On the ward/unit/day hospital?

3. How supported have you felt in the group?

4. Is there any way you feel the group could be improved?

5. To what extent have you felt part of the group?

6. Did you find the reading material helpful?
0-10 (0 = totally unhelpful 10 = extremely helpful)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. To what extent did you enjoy the group?
(0 = not at all 10 = extremely enjoyable)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Were there any particular texts which you enjoyed reading?
If so, why?

9. Would you consider attending a reading group outside the
ward/unit/hospital eg in a library or community centre?

Brief Interview format: Service users

NAME:

LOCATION:

DATE:

Why are you attending the Reader group?

What did you expect from the group?

Did you get it?

Is there anything you don't like?

What benefits have you gained from the group?