

Making it REAL Lewisham Programme Evaluation

1) Invitation to quote

The [National Children's Bureau](#) (NCB) is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced academic partner to undertake an evaluation of the Making it REAL Lewisham Programme (2021-2024), which is being delivered by NCB in partnership with Lewisham local authority.

The broad aim of this evaluation is to assess the impact of Making it REAL in improving communication, language and literacy outcomes for pre-school children, and how effectively Making it REAL has been embedded across the borough of Lewisham. The evidence from this evaluation will contribute to Making it REAL's existing evidence base and will be used to inform future planning for similar programmes.

Proposal documents should be sent to Sarah Creek, Programme Lead
screek@ncb.org.uk by **midday on Monday 13th September**

If you have a question about this brief or your proposal please email Sarah directly. We will be collating the responses to all questions from applicants and a Frequently Asked Questions document will be provided by **Friday 3rd September**. The last day for questions will be **Friday 27th August**.

2) Information about the Making it REAL Lewisham Programme

In partnership with Lewisham local authority, NCB is leading an ambitious three-year programme from 2021 – 2024 to build the capacity of the early years sector and to improve outcomes for young children and their families in Lewisham, particularly in communication, language and early literacy.

[Making it REAL Lewisham](#) is funded by a grant from the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington (for which the [Mercers' Company](#) is corporate trustee) and informed by local stakeholders including Lewisham Early Years Education department, practitioners and families and wider partners working with children and families in Lewisham. The programme is also governed by a Programme Board, including

representatives from these stakeholder groups, NCB's Senior Leadership Team and senior leaders from Lewisham local authority.

Our approach:

The basis for this programme is NCB's Making it REAL. NCB is working in partnership with Lewisham local authority to deliver Making it REAL across the borough, embedding it through a systems wide approach to support children and families.

Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)

Engaging parents in their children's early literacy development has been shown to improve children's outcomes and help to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and other children. NCB's Making it REAL training and projects enable practitioners to reach out to parents and families, building confidence and knowledge to support early home learning, with a powerful impact on children's outcomes and on family literacy practice.

NCB is engaging with Lewisham stakeholders and providing tools, expertise and resources in the following ways:

Delivering Making it REAL across the whole borough through a three-strand approach:**STRAND 1: Making it REAL home learning programme**

60 settings will be trained over three years to deliver the Making it REAL home learning programme, working directly with 460 children and families through one-to-one high-quality interaction visits. Practitioners receive training and support to implement the programme, which consists of early years practitioners working closely with selected individual families through home or close to home visits and opening up wider engagement with more families through fun and interactive literacy events.

STRAND 2: Sharing REAL with Parents

Sharing REAL with Parents is a group-based programme for families to understand and share ideas in how to support their child's early literacy development in a fun way. A trained practitioner supports parents in an informal way sharing group activities and conversations and aims to hand over knowledge of the REAL approach to parents. Parents are encouraged to share their knowledge with other families.

Sharing REAL with Parents aims to reach 110 families across the three-years.

STRAND 3: One-day training in the Making it REAL approach

Making it REAL one-day training enables practitioners to gain an understanding of the REAL approach (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) and to identify ways to include it in everyday practice. The training encourages practitioners to share the REAL approach with parents and families, building confidence and knowledge to support the early home learning environment.

All early years settings (PVI, nursery classes, nursery schools and children and families centres) and childminders will be offered the opportunity to take part in the one-day training. The ambition is that by the end of the three years, every early years setting in Lewisham will have at least one trained practitioner.

Embedding Making it REAL in Lewisham through a systems wide approach

To embed Making it REAL in Lewisham, NCB will work with Lewisham local authority to:

- establish a Making it REAL network in Lewisham, creating a knowledge sharing hub and support to enable the continuation of Making it REAL once the programme has ended
- create opportunities for families to take part in communication, language and literacy activities within the local community
- establish Making it REAL as part of Lewisham's early help strategy to support children's communication, language and literacy development
- ensure partners and stakeholders working with children and families in Lewisham have knowledge of the programme and are able to signpost to it as appropriate
- use 'train the trainer' model to train local practitioners to enable the continuation of Making it REAL once the programme has ended

Further Development

As the programme is developed within Lewisham to meet the local context, needs and priorities, there may be the opportunity for further activities to develop as extensions to delivering the Making it REAL programme. These activities would be included within the scope of this evaluation.

3) Aims for the evaluation

The key aims of this evaluation are:

1. Demonstrate the impact of Making it REAL on children's communication, language and early literacy outcomes, including strengthening the measure of impact (tools used)
2. Contribute to the existing evidence base of Making it REAL
3. Inform future planning for similar programmes taking a borough-wide approach to implementing Making it REAL

This evaluation will provide a quantitative and qualitative report for NCB and needs to assess the impact of the programme against the following **programme aims**:

- Improve the communication, language and early literacy of 2-4 year olds
- Increase uptake of disadvantaged children accessing 2 year old early education place
- Upskill early years workforce to support communication, language and early literacy skills in settings and through the home learning environment
- Increase parental knowledge, confidence and skills in supporting their children's early learning
- Embed Making it REAL within early education in Lewisham

The evaluator/s will be asked to test the following hypothesis:

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|---|
| 1. Making it REAL project children ¹ show improvement in communication, language and early literacy |
| 2. Increased number of children in Lewisham achieving a Good Level of Development at the end of reception, with gap narrowing between disadvantaged children and peers ² |
| 3. Increased number of disadvantaged children accessing 2 year old early education place. |
| 4. Early years workforce has increased knowledge of how to support young children's early literacy development |
| 5. Making it REAL project parents ³ have increased knowledge and confidence to support young children's early learning and literacy development |

¹ Making it REAL project children are those who have engaged in the Making it REAL home learning programme (Strand 1)

² We know this could be problematic due to no EYFSP data collection for the past two years and changes to the ELGs from September 2021, and would like to work with evaluators to explore comparable alternatives

³ Making it REAL project parents refers to those who have engaged in the Making it REAL home learning programme (Strand 1) or who have attended Sharing REAL with Parents workshops (Strand 2)

Other areas to consider as part of the evaluation:

- How successful has the programme been in reaching and engaging key partners and stakeholders?
- How successful has the programme been in establishing Making it REAL as part of Lewisham's early help strategy to support communication, language and literacy?
- How successful has the programme been in embedding Making it REAL within early education in Lewisham?
- How successful has the programme been in increasing the frequency of children and families engaging in early communication, language and literacy activities at home, within settings and the community?
- How has the local context of Lewisham influenced this impact?
- What (if any) have been the key barriers and enablers to the achievement of the programme through each strand? How could these barriers be overcome?
- To what extent has the approach been embedded so as to be sustained beyond the life of the funded programme?
- What might be next steps for key stakeholders in Lewisham in terms of sustaining Making it REAL beyond the life of the programme?

4) Potential Methods and Participants

We would anticipate the evaluation approach to include a mixed methodology which may include:

- data analysis of existing monitoring data for strands of the programme⁴
- documentary analysis of relevant NCB documentation produced during the programme
- feedback from key stakeholders, which may include face-to-face/virtual meetings and/or surveys

However, we would look to applicants to bring their expertise and to propose appropriate methods and approaches that address the key evaluation aims and quantifiable outcomes and explore the potential for a control group. NCB welcomes the incorporation of innovative approaches to its evaluation work.

We would anticipate the following key stakeholders to be involved as participants in the evaluation:

- representatives of Lewisham local authority

⁴ See Annex for proposed timescale of programme strands and data gathering measures

- representatives from a range of partners and stakeholders involved in work with young children and families in Lewisham
- representatives from a broad range of the children's workforce who have participated in training, meetings and workshops and delivered the interventions
- families involved in the programme
- staff from NCB core team

NCB will provide contact details for all required participants in accordance with the programme and NCB's data protection and safeguarding standards.

5) NCB ways of working & quality assurance

NCB takes a co-production approach to designing and delivering its programmes of work, working with local partners to facilitate workforce development opportunities and REAL interventions that are appropriate and acceptable to the needs of the local context.

Proposals should identify how evaluators would quality assure their evaluation.

This should include an assessment of identified risks and appropriate mitigation of these risks in line with the requirements of your proposed methodology.

We anticipate that data collection for this contract will include direct data collection in addition to the review and analysis of existing programme documentation, such as participant feedback and children's progress data.

Proposals should address how the evaluation work would be underpinned by strong ethical principles relating to the dignity and safety of participants, as well as how the evaluators propose addressing issues such as, data protection, informed consent, confidentiality & anonymity.

The NCB team will raise awareness of the evaluation work being conducted with our relevant partners and we will produce an information sheet which will be distributed to relevant staff and partners, to ensure that there is awareness and understanding of the evaluation, its purpose and timescales.

NCB will facilitate access to relevant programme and intervention documentation and monitoring data.

NCB requires that evaluators are in possession of relevant, up to date and valid policies in carrying out this work.

Please confirm in Appendix 1 of your proposal document that you or your organisation possess the following policies and the scope of their cover. If you are applying as a lone consultant, please also provide these policies or equivalent documentation which demonstrate your commitment and/or training for each policy.

You are not required to provide evidence for each policy, or a copy of each policy but confirmation of your commitment to each is mandatory for applicants to be successful.

- Employers Liability Insurance – Only mandatory if you are applying on behalf of an organisation and/or a team that you will manage
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Public Liability Insurance
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates – Only mandatory if your proposed method requires direct and unsupervised contact with parents, children and childcare settings.
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data protection/Data Management Policy – please include a statement of how you would manage data collected and shared across the evaluation within your proposal
- Equal Opportunities Policy

Intellectual property

All intellectual property rights arising from the work will reside with NCB and prior consent would need to be gained to publish any findings related to this work. Any information provided by NCB in the course of this work should be treated by the Contractor as confidential, except where prior written consent has been given that such information may be disclosed. The dissemination of information within the Contractor's organisation should be on a need-to-know basis.

6) Project tendering, outputs & timescales

Outputs for the evaluation will include:

- Briefing Report at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 of the programme
- Final Report at the end of the three-year programme.

A draft final report should be produced by the stated deadline for comment, and then the Final Report, incorporating NCB comments and amendments will be required. The Final Report will be published and shared with the funder, the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington (for which the Mercers' Company is corporate trustee).

Timeline

Tuesday 10th August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite to tender issued
Friday 27th August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for FAQ questions
Friday 3rd September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ circulated to all applicants
Monday 13th September 2021 – 12pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for proposals
Friday 17th September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications notified of shortlisting decision
Week beginning 20th September 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews held: Wednesday 22nd September
Week beginning 27th September (or as soon as possible after this date)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract start date
By Friday 1st October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful applicant(s) to be appointed to attend an inception meeting with NCB
By Wednesday 13th October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final scope, methodology and data collection approaches agreed
October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork and data collection will commence
26th August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing Report for Year 1 submitted
25th August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing Report for Year 2 submitted
30th June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We anticipate all fieldwork and data collection to be completed by this date
2nd August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Final report submitted to NCB for comment
16th August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report submitted to NCB

7) Format and Assessment criteria

We are looking for proposals of no more than 8 sides of A4 from suitably qualified evaluators to evaluate the Making it REAL Lewisham Programme. Your proposal should address how you meet the tender Assessment Criteria which is listed below. Within these 8 sides we would expect to see your understanding of the brief, methodology, costs, and timescale for delivery.

Assessment Criteria

Demonstration of understanding the brief	5 marks
Suitability of proposed methodology for addressing evaluation aims and Making it REAL Lewisham's quantifiable outcomes	45 marks
Extent of proven track record in the required areas of experience	25 marks
Value for money	20 marks
Appropriateness of policies and procedures relating to Quality Assurance, managing risk and data protection.	5 marks
TOTAL	100 marks

Please also provide three appendices with the following information:

- Appendix 1 – Confirmation and details of policies listed in section '5) NCB ways of working & quality assurance' as well as a table of any identified risks and mitigating actions.
- Appendix 2 – Documents and details of your experience and proven track record not contained within the 8 pages of your proposal. Please ensure you demonstrate the following criteria in this appendix:
 - Experience of conducting evaluations of community-based programmes or initiatives
 - Experience of conducting evaluations using both qualitative and quantitative methods
 - Experience of conducting research/evaluations within the early years/early literacy arena
 - Experience of conducting research using online and face-to-face methods

Organisations must demonstrate they meet these criteria across the whole team who will deliver the evaluation.

- Appendix 3 – Details of your organisation and/or research team, if applicable. If you are applying as independent consultant you may include information about your professional practice solely within Appendix 2

Value for money section notes:

The budget for the three-year evaluation is **up to £18,000 (inclusive of VAT where applicable)**. This amount includes expenses for travel and subsistence.

Proposals should include details of all costs broken down by specific task, daily or hourly rate and by different roles/evaluators (if applicable). Please also provide a final total cost for the work, inclusive of VAT and all expenses (including travel).

Please ensure that you provide a breakdown of the number of days and your daily rates alongside proposed evaluation activities in this section.

Annex

Timescale of Programme Strands

STRAND 1: Making it REAL targeted home learning programme (Year 1)

Timeline for Making it REAL targeted home learning programme in Lewisham	
September/October 2021	Practitioners take part in 2 day Making it REAL Training
By 15th November 2021	Enrol families and arrange for first home visit with each family First home visit complete paperwork with parents: 1. Consent form. 2. The Pre-Data questionnaires. 3. A summary of first home visit. Attend 1 st Network meeting
By 10th December 2021	All 1 st home visits to be complete with families All paperwork submitted for each family
By 15th February 2022	All 2 nd home visits to be complete with families Complete a summary of activity at 2 nd home visit Attend 2 nd Network meeting
By 31st March 2022	All 3 rd home visits to be complete with families Complete a summary of activity at 3 rd home visit
By 30th April 2022	All 4 th home visits/contacts to be complete with families Final home visit complete the post data questionnaires with parents: Complete a summary of activity at 4 th home visit Attend 3 rd Network meeting
By 27th May 2022 - end of the project, following to be submitted:	All post data for each child A summary for each visit attended

STRAND 2: Sharing REAL with Parents

Each year, 4 rounds of Sharing REAL with Parents will be delivered.

Plan for Year 1 is:

- Nov - Dec 2021 – Round 1 of Sharing REAL with Parents
- Jan – Feb 2022 - Round 2 of Sharing REAL with Parents
- March - April 2022 - Round 3 of Sharing REAL with Parents
- May - June 2022 - Round 4 of Sharing REAL with Parents

This will be developed to meet local needs and may change over the course of the year.

STRAND 3: One-day training in the Making it REAL approach

There will be 10 training days held across each year from October – June.

Data gathering measures**Strand 1: Making it REAL targeted home learning programme**

Pre and post engagement in the programme:

- Standardised language measurement tool, for example Wellcom
- Child observation questionnaires (practitioner and parent) assessing children's communication, language and literacy development and skills
- Feedback and observations on outcomes achieved from practitioner and parent survey
- Detailed written report of home visits recorded by practitioners
- Cohort data about number of children achieving a Good Level of Development
- Survey to assess practitioners' knowledge, confidence and skills
- Survey to assess parents' knowledge, confidence and skills and the home learning environment

Strand 2: Sharing REAL with parents

- Pre and post surveys with parents who have completed workshops
- Practitioner observations and reports

Strand 3: Universal one-day Making it REAL training

- Pre-training survey to assess practitioners' knowledge, confidence and skills
- Post-training survey to assess practitioners' knowledge, confidence and skills
- Annual survey to gather feedback from practitioners about the programme and impact on practice in the setting