

Making it REAL Lewisham Programme Evaluation

Timescale: up to 12 months

1) Invitation to quote

The [National Children's Bureau](https://www.ncb.org.uk) (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 evaluation to be conducted during Year 3 of the programme (September 2023-August 2024) and to include analysis and reporting of data collected by NCB during years 1 and 2.

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 **Friday 1st September 2023**.

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 **Wednesday 9th August 2023**. The last day for questions will be **Wednesday 3rd August 2023**.

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 trained over three years to deliver the Making it REAL home learning programme, working directly with 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.

STRAND 3: Universal introductory training in the Making it REAL approach

Making it REAL introductory 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 (PvIs, nursery classes, nursery schools and children and families centres) and childminders will be offered the opportunity to take part in the universal introductory training.

Embedding Making it REAL in Lewisham through a systems wide approach

To embed Making it REAL in Lewisham, NCB is working 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.
- 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.

3) Main aim of the evaluation

The key aims of this evaluation are:

1. To assess the impact of Making it REAL on children's communication, language, and early literacy outcomes.
2. To assess how effectively Making it REAL has been embedded across the borough of Lewisham.
3. To contribute to Making it REAL's existing evidence base and inform future planning for similar programmes.

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:
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

Other areas to consider as part of the evaluation:

- How successful has the programme been in reaching and engaging key partners and stakeholders?

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 2020 and 2021, changes to the ELGs from September 2021, and that EYFSP data is now unmoderated. EYFSP 2022 data will be taken as the baseline data for the programme, with 2023 and 2024 EYFSP data measured against this.

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)

- 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 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) Methods and Participants

We anticipate a mixed method evaluation approach which may include:

- data analysis of existing monitoring data for strands of the programme (provided by NCB)
- documentary analysis of relevant NCB documentation produced during the programme (provided by NCB)
- primary research (interviews/focus groups/surveys) with key stakeholders

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

- representatives of Lewisham local authority
- 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 and children 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

The output for the evaluation will be a quantitative and qualitative report with supporting evidence (stats/quotes/vignettes), assessing impact against aims of the programme and assessing sustainability of the 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).

Indicative timescale and budget:

Thursday 20th July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite to tender issued
Wednesday 3rd August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for FAQ questions
Wednesday 9th August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ circulated to all applicants
Friday 1st September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for proposals
Monday 11th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications notified of shortlisting decision
Week beginning 11th September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews held: Thursday 14th September 2023
September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract start date
By Friday 22nd September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful applicant(s) to be appointed to attend an inception meeting with NCB
By Friday 29th September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final scope, methodology and data collection approaches agreed

From October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We anticipate that fieldwork and data collection will commence
12th July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We anticipate all fieldwork and data collection to be completed by this date
9th August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Final report submitted to NCB for comment
23rd August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Report submitted to NCB

The maximum budget for the 12 months evaluation is up to £15,000 (inclusive of VAT where applicable).

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 outline:

- Proposed methodology and how it will meet the evaluation aims
- Relevant experience and delivery team
- Project plan
- Overview of costs

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 6 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
- **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 12 months evaluation is **up to £15,000 (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

Data gathering measures

Strand 1: Making it REAL targeted home learning programme

- Post-training survey to assess practitioners' knowledge, confidence and skills
- Pre and post engagement in the programme:
 - Child observation questionnaires (practitioner and parent) assessing children's communication, language, and literacy development and skills
 - Survey to assess parents' knowledge, confidence and skills and the home learning environment
 - Feedback and observations on outcomes achieved from parent
 - Written report of home visits recorded by practitioners
- Cohort data about number of children achieving a Good Level of Development
- Annual survey to gather feedback from practitioners about the programme, impact on practice in the setting and on children and families
- Case studies

Strand 2: Sharing REAL with parents

- Post surveys with parents who have completed workshops
- Practitioner observations and reports
- Case studies

Strand 3: Universal introductory Making it REAL training

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