



LITERATE

DISCONNECTED

Our impact 2020/21



National
Literacy
Trust

Changing life stories

About the National Literacy Trust

Our charity is dedicated to improving the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of those who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in school, work and life.

We run Literacy Hubs and campaigns in communities where low levels of literacy and social mobility are seriously impacting people's lives. We support schools and early years settings to deliver outstanding literacy provision, and we campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents.

Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions.

Literacy is a vital element of action against poverty and our work changes life stories.

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Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall

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Chief Executive

Jonathan Douglas CBE, Hon FRSL

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Introduction



I am immensely proud to have chaired the National Literacy Trust during the past 12 months. In the toughest of years the charity has had a huge impact on the literacy of children, young people and families in our most disadvantaged communities. Throughout the pandemic the National Literacy Trust worked heroically to minimise the impact of educational and social disruption on literacy in these communities.

The agility with which it has met this challenge, thanks to the generous help of all our supporters, meant that more than half a million digitally excluded children could carry on reading and learning with books and physical resources when they couldn't be in the classroom or access a library. And well over a million young people accessed the National Literacy Trust's support online.

As the data begins to come through it is apparent that the pandemic has widened the literacy attainment gap, disproportionately impacting the skills of the most disadvantaged children. Research also suggests that the impact of the pandemic is stronger in maths and other subjects than literacy for primary aged children. I am confident that the National Literacy Trust's efforts have played a vital part in softening the impact.

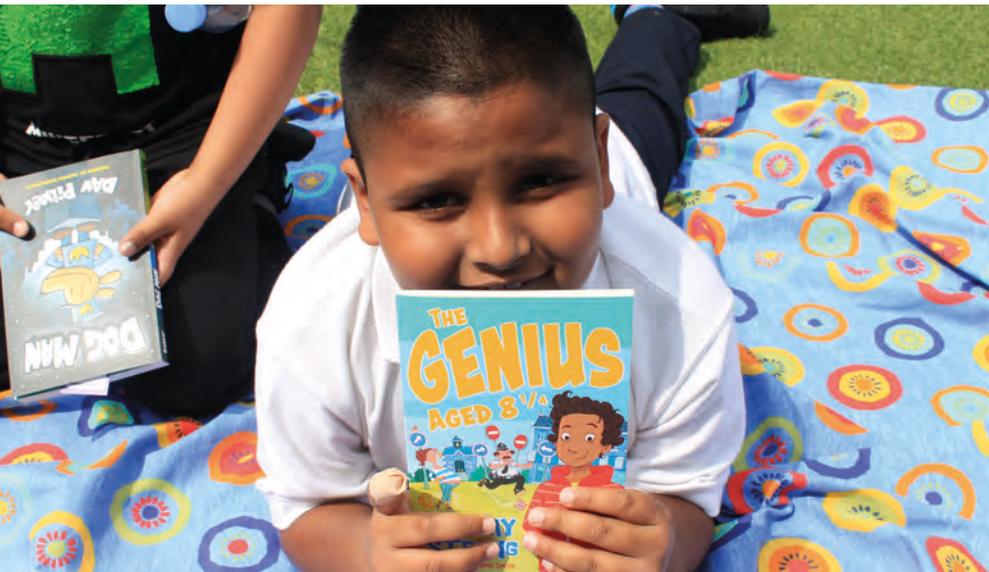
I am incredibly grateful for the unstinting support of the National Literacy Trust's business partners over the past 12 months. They recognise not only the social and moral imperative for raising literacy levels but also that the economy itself can only recover if literacy skills are in place. The 2021 Vision for Literacy Business Pledge has been signed by a group of 83 businesses, convened by KPMG, and I am grateful for their support and inspired by their commitment.

The Patronage of HRH The Duchess of Cornwall has been a source of great inspiration during the last year. It was a great honour to welcome Her Royal Highness to the launch of our Virtual School Library and to our online school assembly to mark World Book Day. Our Patron's deep understanding of the power of reading and natural empathy with the families we support has strengthened our mission.

As our charity now faces the immense challenge of literacy recovery, we can be confident that our skilled staff, our wonderful alliance of partners and our track record of impact during the pandemic give us a solid foundation to address this challenge with commitment and creativity.

Julia Cleverdon

Dame Julia Cleverdon DCVO CBE
Chair



In March 2020 the National Literacy Trust's partners, projects and campaigns for 2020/21 were carefully lined up. We had identified our priorities for the year and were about to embark on an exciting programme of activities. Then in a matter of days, the pandemic turned our plans upside down. Schools and nurseries were forced to close their doors to the vast majority of pupils. Libraries, the nation's democratic powerhouses of reading, were closed. Prisoners couldn't access their libraries or skills units – many were locked in their cells for over 23 hours a day. The entire education infrastructure we work hand in hand with to deliver our projects and campaigns was paused.

But we immediately understood that this disruption made our mission to address educational inequality even more pressing: we knew that support for children's learning at home in the poorest communities would be significantly weaker – 1 in 11 children from disadvantaged communities do not own a single book and up to 40% of adults in our Hub communities have literacy issues. School closures would significantly exacerbate the literacy attainment gap. We responded immediately in two ways: for the majority of families the best way to access our literacy support during lockdown was through our digital platforms. However there was also an immediate need to support digitally excluded families with physical resources and books.

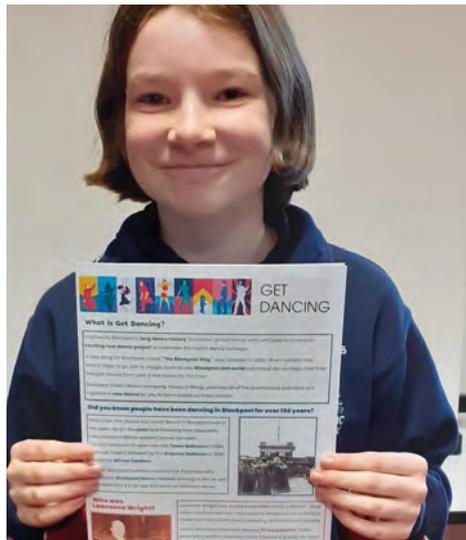
These two strands – digital support and physical resources for the digitally excluded – became the focus of our strategy in 2020/21 and enabled us to support the literacy of over 1.8million young people. Our programmes and mission were delivered online and through community partnerships with foodbanks, faith centres and domestic violence charities.

Our digital platforms and our new Virtual School Library delivered with Oak National Academy were used by well over a million young readers who couldn't access their school or public libraries. In our Hub communities, with the lowest levels of literacy and the highest levels of poverty, we distributed 575,643 books, magazines and writing resources donated by publishers. Thousands of young people in our Hubs took part in Connecting Stories, our reader development project that gives children access to literacy experiences and books, supported by 26 publishers and Arts Council England.

Our focus is now firmly on literacy recovery because it is the bedrock of economic, cultural and social community development. The challenge is vast – alongside disruption to education, the social and emotional impact of the pandemic has dented the literacy of a generation. We are committed to addressing this challenge with the same agility and focus that shaped our work during the pandemic, aware that the children from the communities who have suffered most in the past year deserve exceptional and timely support to change their life stories.

Jonathan Douglas

Jonathan Douglas CBE, Hon FRSL
Chief Executive



The need

1 in 11 children from disadvantaged communities do not own a single book



We reached 575,643 children through the distribution of books and literacy resources

During lockdown 30% of disadvantaged households did not have access to good quality broadband



We supported families in disadvantaged communities by delivering physical resources of books, writing pads and stationery during lockdown

During the first lockdown 60% of parents of primary school children struggled to support their children's learning at home



We launched two new online platforms to support the literacy of children and young people out of school: Family Zone for up to age 11 and Zone in for age 13+

Re-engaging learners after a year of disrupted learning was a priority for schools



We launched our online Education Recovery area with evidence-based training, interventions, programmes and resources to support teachers

Ongoing local and partial lockdowns continued to impact schools and learners



We launched our Virtual School Library, delivered with Oak National Academy, providing digital access to children's books for hundreds of thousands of young readers

The emotional wellbeing of many children and young people has been profoundly affected by the pandemic



We launched the online version of *The Book of Hopes*, published by Bloomsbury. With the support of Bupa Foundation, 15,000 copies were sent to 5,000 primary schools

Our impact in 2020/21

We **supported** the literacy of the

700,000

children who were out of school and couldn't access digital learning



We had **over**

1,000,000

unique users to our family-focused website **Words for Life**

We **distributed**



575,643

books, magazines and writing resources during lockdown to support children in disadvantaged communities

We worked with



6,492

schools, supporting their efforts to re-engage and inspire learners

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Our **campaigning** had a **reach** of

447m



and an equivalent **advertising value** of

£16.6m

We inspired

83



businesses to **prioritise literacy** through the **Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2021**



We reformed the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy**, with new Chair Christian Wakeford MP for Bury South, at an event **attended by over**

100

participants

Our **Twitter followers** reached **91,000**



our **Facebook likes** rose to **23,000**



our **Instagram followers** hit **12,000**



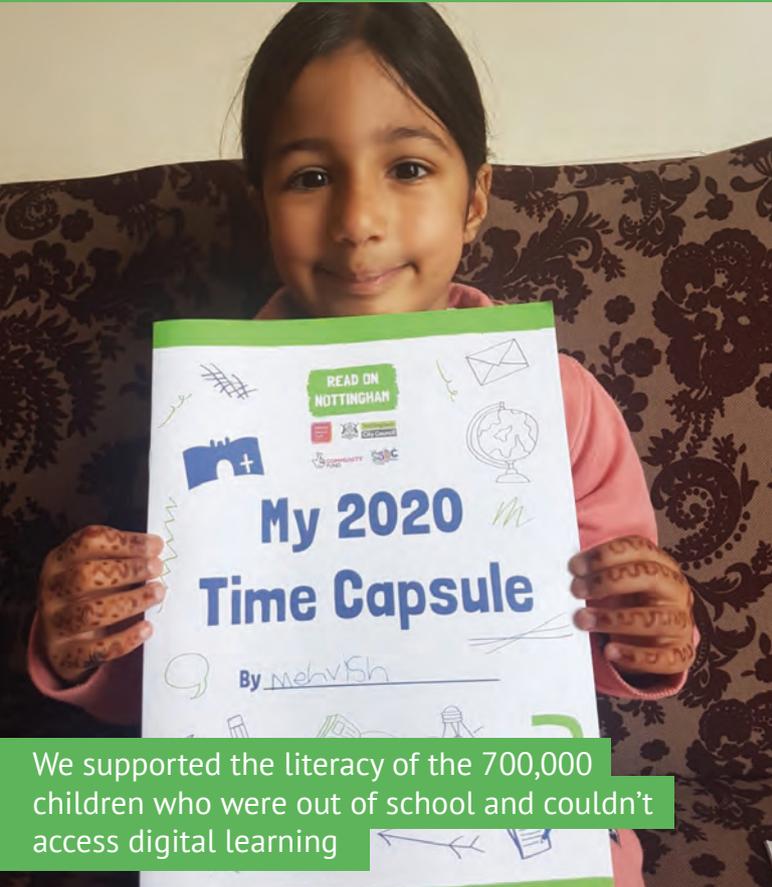
and our **LinkedIn following** rose to **10,000**



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Phase 1, First lockdown, April – June

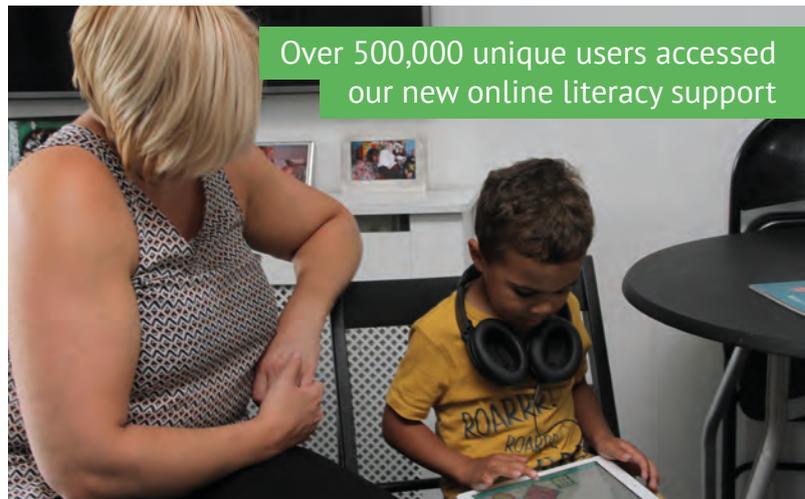
Maintain the engagement of children and young people with literacy activities to prevent the literacy gap from widening



We supported the literacy of the 700,000 children who were out of school and couldn't access digital learning



Our Family Zone platform launched to support literacy of children out of school up to the age of 11



Over 500,000 unique users accessed our new online literacy support



We distributed over 300,000 books and literacy packs directly into the hands of children and families in the most disadvantaged areas



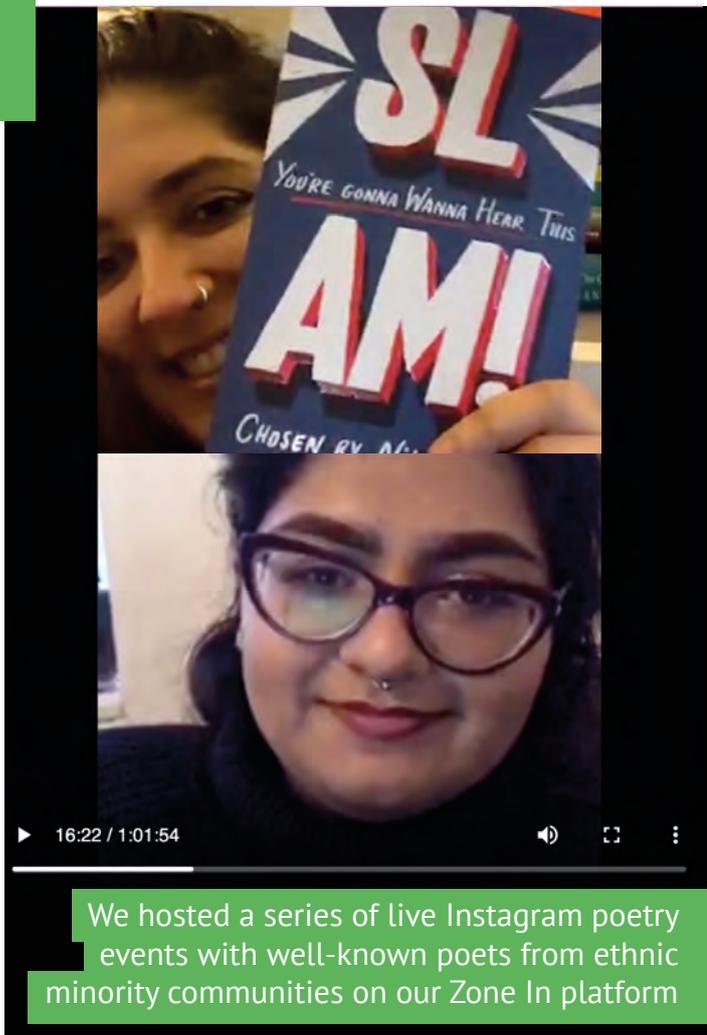
We worked through our Hubs and community partners, including foodbanks and community charities, to distribute books, literacy resources and writing assets

Phase 2, Reopening of schools, July – December

Re-engage learners and support young people's wellbeing through literacy activities



As part of Dream Big, pupils from Rosedale Primary School in Doncaster became doctors for the day writing prescriptions for their patients



We hosted a series of live Instagram poetry events with well-known poets from ethnic minority communities on our Zone In platform



Our programmes were a vital resource for many schools in promoting reading and writing for enjoyment



HRH The Duchess of Cornwall launched our Virtual School Library at Ivydale Primary School in London



Parents and their two-year-olds enjoyed an Early Words Together outdoors session at Leyton Square Children's Centre

Phase 3, Return to lockdown, January – March
Maintain literacy engagement and skills and support wellbeing



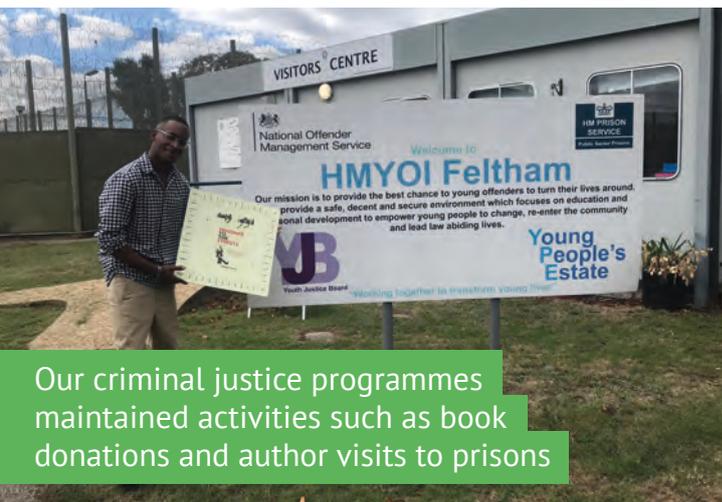
World Book Day digital activities involving HRH The Duchess of Cornwall, Katherine Rundell, Zanib Mian, Tom Fletcher and Children's Laureate, Cressida Cowell, reached thousands of children in homes and schools



Our partners and supporters again responded generously to supporting our work with the donation of an additional 150,000 books



We were awarded government funding for resources to support families with pre-school children in the most disadvantaged communities



Our criminal justice programmes maintained activities such as book donations and author visits to prisons



Our virtual *Where's Wally?* Weekender run took place and more Wallys than ever took part!



Work with us

Help us tackle the UK literacy challenge through our work.



Schools and nurseries:

Membership, resources, training, interventions and support for schools, teachers and students to enable a recovery programme following lockdowns and school closures



Communities:

Partnerships with local areas to give long-term support to families through community activation and behaviour change, working with businesses, schools, community groups and the public sector



Campaigning:

Research and surveys, high street and consumer media campaigns focused on our response to COVID-19, policy activity and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy

Corporate partnerships

Corporate partnerships with the National Literacy Trust bring strategic benefits to businesses and we would be delighted to discuss how we might work with you. We are proud to develop partnerships that transform lives through literacy and offer lots of ways to work together.

For example, you could:

- Choose the National Literacy Trust as your charity partner and bring your employees together to raise money, have fun and make a difference to the 4.6m children living in poverty whose lives have been impacted by school closures and COVID-19
- Support one of our programmes in your local community with inspirational employee volunteering opportunities
- Sponsor our respected research programme and show your commitment to tackling the UK's literacy crisis which has been heightened by COVID-19
- Collaborate with us through a brand partnership to share vital literacy messages with your customers, strengthening your brand awareness and your alliance with this vital cause
- Become a signatory of the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge - visit literacytrust.org.uk/businesspledge

If you are interested in becoming a corporate partner, or would like more information, please contact partnerships@literacytrust.org.uk

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Our corporate partners include:



Our public body grant and trusts and foundations supporters include:

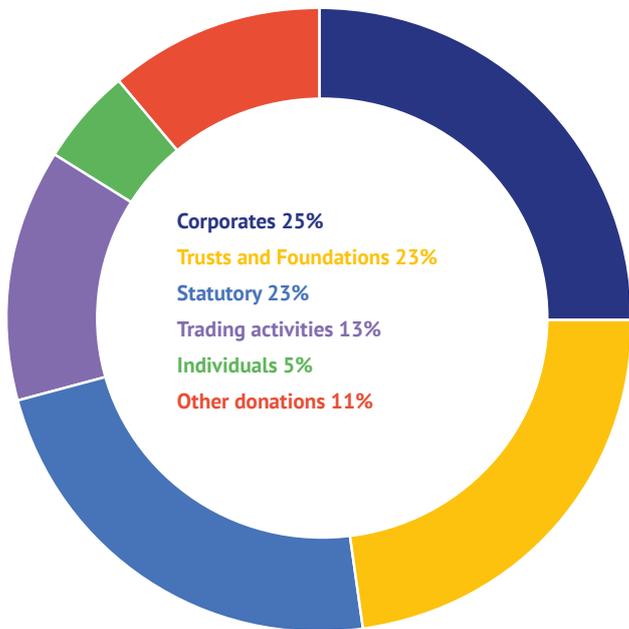


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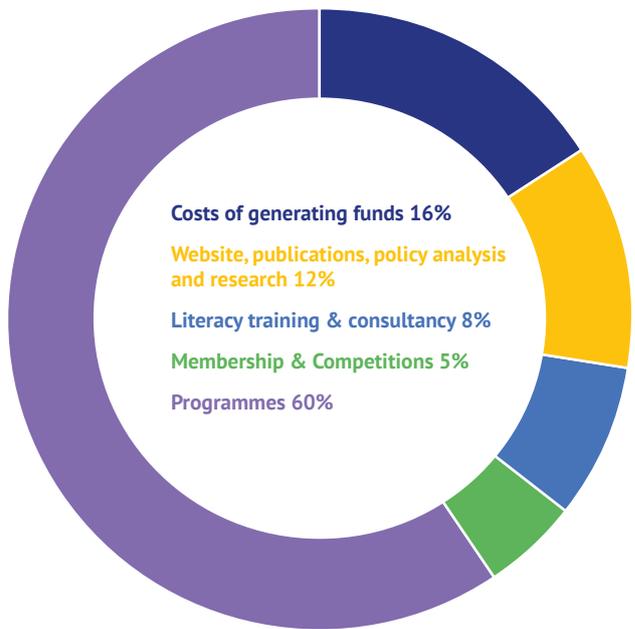


At 10am on 10 May 2021, 100,000 people across the UK took 10 minutes to read to support their wellbeing in our Take 10 moment

Sources of income



Income allocation



Donate to the National Literacy Trust

For every pound you give, 84p is spent directly on helping more families and children living in disadvantaged areas of the UK and raising the profile of literacy with employers, government and schools. 16p is spent on development.

literacytrust.org.uk/donate



With thanks

We are very grateful for all of the wonderful support received from individuals and organisations who help us deliver our work. It is not possible to say thank you for every single donation received throughout the year in such a small space - however, we would like to thank the following in particular:

Financial support

Partners & corporate • ALCS • Amazon • Anchorage Capital Europe, LLP • Audible Ltd • Baker McKenzie LLP • Better World Books • BGL Group • Bupa Foundation • Chiltern Railways • CityFibre Holdings Limited • Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP • Daily Mail • Experian Ltd • Foolproof • Goldman Sachs • Good Candles • Good Loop • Great Portland Estates plc • Great Western Railway • Immediate Media Co. Ltd. • International Paper - REY Paper • Itaú BBA International plc • Kennedys Law LLP • KPMG LLP • Lancôme • Linklaters • McDonald's UK • Moorcroft Pottery • News UK • Octopus Energy • Orbit Group • Premier Public Relations Ltd • Professional Footballers' Association • Provident Financial Group plc • PwC • RWE • Serjeants' Inn Chambers • Slaughter and May • Steelite • SuperAwesome • The British Land Company PLC • The Estée Lauder Companies UK & Ireland • The Football Association Limited • The Morrisons Foundation • The Nottingham Building Society • The Walt Disney Co. Ltd. • Tiney • Tong Garden Centre • Transpennine Express • Trowers & Hamblins LLP • Turner & Townsend • VenCap International plc • WHSmith • World Book Day • WSP •

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