



For immediate release: Friday 3 February 2023

Westminster's Lord Mayor Visits Doorstep Library Reading Project

The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Hamza Taouzzale, visited Westminster based reading projects yesterday (February 2), with children's literacy charity Doorstep Library. Through the reading projects volunteers bring rucksacks filled with books directly to the doorstep, or the home, to share with children. During his visit he met with Doorstep Library reading volunteers and accompanied them to visit families who take part in the reading service. Sitting in on the reading sessions he had an opportunity to see children sharing books and stories with their reading volunteers, and to talk to parents about the service and how it has impacted them.

The Lord Mayor, who was raised on the Lisson Green Estate in Westminster, takes a keen interest in local projects which support young people in the area. Meeting with volunteers and families he saw first hand the joy that Doorstep Library visits bring to the children and their parents.

One parent said: "With two young kids I found it hard going to the library, but then when Doorstep Library started coming to me, I couldn't believe my luck!"

Last year, Doorstep Library visited over 130 children in Westminster. Pairs of volunteers visit the same children each week during term time to bring books and share stories. Each week they carefully select books with each child's reading ability and particular interests in mind, and with the aim of inspiring a love of reading for pleasure from the youngest age. In 2022, Doorstep Library volunteers brought over 3,000 books directly into the homes of Westminster families, and young readers there are asking for thousands more in 2023.

Katie Bareham, CEO of Doorstep Library said: *"We are delighted to be able to show the Lord Mayor the vital work our charity is doing in those areas of Westminster where families are often under-served. After multiple lockdowns and now the cost-of-living crisis we know there is a rising educational attainment gap between children from these areas and those from more affluent backgrounds. We want to redress that balance and ensure that every child has access to books and reading for pleasure."*

"As well as bringing books, our volunteers also support families by signposting them to a range of other local services and resources. This fosters better relationships within communities and ensures that families are not isolated. It is hugely inspiring to the children and families we visit to be able to meet with someone in the Lord Mayor's position, who has come from a very



similar background to them. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue about how we can develop our services to reach even more families in the future.”

Lord Mayor of Westminster Councillor Hamza Taouzzale said a favourite part of his childhood was reading bedtime stories with his mum:

“We know stories stoke our ambitions to dream big and strengthen the bonds between parents and children. Some of my fondest memories come from reading my favourite books or visiting the library with mum.

“But for our city’s most disadvantaged families, time, stress, and cost mean parents can’t prioritise reading. Doorstep Library is there to support them and make sure they don’t miss out on the power of storytelling.

“I was thrilled to meet local families with similar backgrounds to mine participating in the programme and I commend Doorstep Library and the volunteers for their dedication to our youth.”

The charity currently has a long waiting list of families who would love to join the service. Anyone interested in becoming a Reading Volunteer with Doorstep Library, either in person or online, please visit: <https://volunteer.doorsteplib.org.uk/> where they can apply.

ENDS

Press contact: Henri Yoxall on 07887 651 285 or email: henrietta@doorsteplib.org.uk

Notes to Editors.

About: Doorstep Library is a community-focused literacy charity dedicated to bringing the magic of books and the joy of reading directly into the homes of children who need our support. With one in four 11-year-olds leaving primary school unable to read or write properly, we recruit and train home and online reading volunteers to go into disadvantaged areas of London and beyond, to help introduce young children (aged 0-11 years) to the pleasure and benefits of reading.

Website: www.doorsteplib.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/doorsteplib

Twitter: [@doorsteplib](https://twitter.com/doorsteplib)



You Tube: [You Tube](#)