



Reading Well for young people: FAQs for library staff

Contents

1. General information	3
What is the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme?	3
What is Reading Well for young people?	3
How does it work?	3
How were the books chosen?	4
What types of books are available through Reading Well for young people?	4
2. The evidence base	4
What is the evidence base for Reading Well for young people?	4
Is there evidence to support the value of creative and social reading?	4
3. The need	5
Is there a need for such a service?	5
Are libraries the right place?	5
4. Conditions covered	6
What conditions are covered by Reading Well for young people?	6
Why are some conditions not included?	6
5. Resources	6
What resources are available to support delivery of the scheme?	6
Can books be added to the list locally?	7
Other resources	7
6. Partnerships	8
Who are the delivery partners?	8
Who are the supporting health partners?	8
7. Launch of Reading Well for young people in libraries	8
When will Reading Well for young people be available in libraries?	8
How will GPs and other health professionals be informed about the scheme	8
8. Extent of library involvement	8
To what extent will English library authorities be supporting Reading Well for young people?	8
Can community managed libraries be involved?	9
Can NHS libraries be involved?	9

Can school and college libraries be involved?	9
9. Co-ordination of Reading Well for young people	9
What role does The Reading Agency play?	9
What role do public library authorities play?	9
How will the scheme be delivered consistently in all libraries?	9
What library concessions support the scheme?.....	10
Should there be a Reading Well for young people book collection in every library?	10
Are the titles available as e-books and in other formats?.....	10
10. Prescribing partnerships	10
How do GPs and other health and social care professionals take part?	10
11. Digital platforms	10
Where can library staff and health professionals find online information and resources related to Reading Well for young people?	10
Where can young people find online information about Reading Well?	10
What role will local library websites play?	10
How can materials be used to promote the scheme?.....	11
Who can we work with to promote the scheme?	11
12. Future Plans	11
Will the Reading Well for young people list be reviewed?.....	11
What are the future plans for Reading Well Books on Prescription?.....	11
13. Evaluation	11
How has the scheme been measured?	11
How will the scheme be measured in the future?	12

1. General information

What is the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme?

Reading Well Books on Prescription provides accredited reading to help people manage their health and wellbeing, available from public libraries. It is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians with funding from Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered by public libraries.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions was launched in June 2013 as the first national scheme for England. A second scheme for people with dementia and their carers was launched in January 2015. The programme is available in 97% of public library authorities and is part of the Society of Chief Librarians' Universal Health Offer.

All books are selected by health professionals and endorsed by leading health organisations including NHS England, Public Health England, the Royal Collage of GPs, Royal College of Psychiatrists and Royal College of Nursing. Health professionals can refer people to a recommended list of accredited titles to help with specific conditions and people can also use the scheme independently as a first step to understanding and managing symptoms and seeking help. The programme complements existing local health services and is a simple way of delivering prevention and early intervention care.

Reading Well Books on Prescription also signposts people to other wellbeing services in libraries, including social and recreational activity such as reading groups and community volunteering.

What is Reading Well for young people?

Reading Well for young people provides recommended reading to young people to help them understand and manage their mental health and wellbeing and build emotional resilience. The scheme provides young people with advice, information and support on a range of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and difficult experiences like bullying and exam stress.

How does it work?

Health professionals, such as GPs, school counsellors, school nurses and CYP IAPT practitioners, can refer young people to titles on the booklist using the recommended reading form in the user leaflet. The scheme may be used while waiting for, or alongside, other forms of treatment as a key element in a supported programme. The scheme might also be used as a stand-alone treatment for young people that GPs have not yet referred to CYP IAPT services.

The books are available in public libraries for anyone to borrow. Young people can therefore use library book collections independently as a first step in seeking help.

How were the books chosen?

The Reading Well for young people booklist was selected through an extensive selection process supported by health professionals and young people. The booklist is evidence based and works within clinical guidelines.

The original longlist of over 200 titles was created as a result of mapping existing library collections and recommendations from health professionals and young people. It was supplemented by a number of recently published titles submitted by publishers. Following a roundtable with experts in the field of young people's mental health, a selection panel was created, which included health professionals and young people with experience of mental health conditions.

The book selection process was underpinned by a robust co-production model, developed with YoungMinds, the leading charity for young people's mental health in the UK. Six young advisors (young people aged 16 to 18 with experience of mental health conditions) were recruited to support book selection and the development of promotional materials. The young advisors also developed and delivered consultation workshops with wider groups of young people across the UK to inform these areas of programme development.

For further information about the selection process, see the [Reading Well book selection protocol](#).

What types of books are available through Reading Well for young people?

The booklist features self-help and psycho-education material, as well as memoirs, graphic novels and fiction. The books can be accessed as e-books, audio versions and in large print, where available.

2. The evidence base

What is the evidence base for Reading Well for young people?

There is a strong evidence base that self-help reading based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy can be effective in understanding and managing common mental health conditions. Evidence suggests that guided self-help reading (as part of a programme of treatment) is more effective than unguided self-help; however, unsupported self-help reading can also be effective for particular conditions. For more details please see the [evidence base](#) page on The Reading Agency website.

Reading Well for young people follows NICE guidelines for common mental health issues and specific mental health issues within children and young people.

Is there evidence to support the value of creative and social reading?

Although there is less clinical data for the wellbeing benefits of creative and social reading, the evidence base for this is growing. For instance, research conducted by MindLab in 2009 found that reading reduced stress levels more than listening to music, going for a walk, or drinking a cup of tea. See the [evidence base](#) for further details. During the book selection process for Reading Well, the YoungMinds young advisors also emphasised the importance of reading fiction as therapeutic and a bridge to the more clinical self-help and psycho-education reading on the list.

3. The need

Is there a need for such a service?

There is enormous need for quality assured mental health information and advice for young people. Contemporary pressures, such as widespread family breakdown, school exam stress, 24-hour social networking and an increase in bullying, have serious implications for the mental health of young people. The following statistics demonstrate this need:

- 10% of children and young people have a diagnosable mental health condition. This represents an average of three young people in every classroom¹
- Rates of mental health problems among children increase as they reach adolescence to 13% of boys and 10% of girls²
- 1 in 10 young people deliberately harm themselves regularly³
- Nearly 300,000 young people in Britain have an anxiety disorder⁴
- 70% of children and young people have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age⁵
- Poor mental health for young people has serious implications for later life, affecting wellbeing and the ability to work and earn as adults

Are libraries the right place?

Research has shown that people see their library as a safe, trusted and non-stigmatised place to go for help with and information about health problems.⁶ Recent 'Taking Part' government data shows that in 2014/15, 73.6% of 11–15 year olds had visited a library within the last year⁷: considering that a high proportion of young people are not receiving the support they need for mental health conditions,⁸ libraries are well placed to provide young people with early intervention support and signpost to other relevant services.

Alongside Reading Well for young people, libraries offer a wide range of other services and support for young people, including volunteering and creative activities through Reading Hack, as well as reading groups and other books and information on health and wellbeing.

¹ www.hscic.gov.uk/pubs/mentalhealth04

² Mental Disorder More Common In Boys, National Statistics Online, 2004

³ Managing self-harm in young people, Royal College of Psychiatrists (CR192)

⁴ <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyouthinfo/youngpeople/worriesandanxieties.aspx>

⁵ The Good Childhood Inquiry: health research evidence, Children's Society, 2008

⁶ *Public Library Activity in the Areas of Health and Well-Being*, Hicks, D., C. et al, MLA, 2010

⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447730/Taking_Part_2014_15_Child_Report_Repaired_.pdf

⁸ Recent reports suggest that 1 in 4 young people may not be receiving the support they need for mental health problems: <http://healthwatchreading.org.uk/englands-child-mental-health-services-failing-three-quarters-kids-guardian/>

4. Conditions covered

What conditions are covered by Reading Well for young people?

Reading Well for young people covers the following conditions and experiences: ADHD; anxiety, worry and panic; autism and Asperger syndrome; body image and eating disorders; bullying; confidence and self-esteem; depression; mood swings; OCD; self-harm; stress.

The general section includes books that cover the following additional topics: bereavement; divorce and separation; sexuality; sleeping problems; substance abuse.

Why are some conditions not included?

The conditions on the Reading Well booklist were selected by the panel according to:

- evidence of need
- availability of suitable and high quality reading material
- an evidence base showing the efficacy of self-help and psycho-education reading for particular conditions
- mapping against CYP IAPT and MindEd curricula

5. Resources

What resources are available to support delivery of the scheme?

Resources currently available to support library staff delivering Reading Well for young people include:

- [Commissioning guide](#): information about the scheme prepared for local health commissioners.
- [PowerPoint presentation](#): a PowerPoint presentation to support library staff to build health partnerships.
- [Complete booklist](#): document containing full list of titles, with author and publisher details.
- [An E-lending availability booklist](#): this notes all available formats for each title, including e-lending availability through Askews and Holts, and Overdrive.
- [Overview document](#): a detailed overview of the 35 titles on the booklist, including ISBN, page extent, available formats, jacket images and blurb.
- [Template GP letter](#): a covering letter that can be sent to local health professionals alongside Reading Well for young people user leaflets
- ['Find shelf help in your local library' plasma screen artwork](#): for promotion of the scheme in libraries and GP surgeries
- ['Find shelf help in your local library' animation](#): short and long versions are available for use on plasma screens and social media
- [Branding guidelines for delivering the scheme](#): these guidelines clarify any branding questions for the Reading Well for young people scheme, give advice on promoting the scheme on social media and detail branding demands for partners.
- [A local library launch pack](#): this includes advice and recommendations on how to run a local launch event
- [A local library press release](#)
- **Printed promotional material – user leaflets, posters, postcards, stickers, pop-up banners and dump bins** – is available to order from [The Reading Agency shop](#).
- **An online training module**: available on the SCL learning pool page from April 2016, this online module provides frontline library staff with training to deliver Reading Well Books on Prescription adult mental health and dementia schemes. It takes approximately 45 minutes to complete and staff receive accreditation upon completion.

- The [Reading Well website](#) provides news and resources about the scheme, as well as full details of all the books, and an opportunity to share reviews
- A **Reading Well newsletter** for library staff, providing updates about the scheme, is sent once a month. If you, or other staff in your authority, would like to be added to this mailing list please email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk.

Can books be added to the list locally?

The core booklist has been endorsed by national partners. Additional material cannot be added to the Reading Well for young people list. Local booklists and other resources, however, can supplement the core list and be signposted in libraries, on local websites and by health care professionals. *It must remain clear that only the titles on the core booklist have been endorsed by national health organisations and charities.*

The Reading Well core book lists are only available for use as part of the scheme. Permission to use the list by non-subscribing agencies should be sought from the Reading Agency.

Other resources

Reading Well for young people signposts to other library wellbeing facilities, as well as other sources of health advice and support, through the user leaflet. You may also want to consider signposting to the following websites and resources for health professionals, young people and parents and caregivers.

General resources

- [YoungMinds](#): YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people.
- [Rethink Mental Illness](#): Rethink directly supports almost 60,000 people every year across England to get through crises, to live independently and to realise they are not alone.
- [Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition](#): The Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition brings together leading charities to campaign jointly on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- [The Mental Health Foundation](#): With knowledge informed by rigorous research and practical based study, The MHF has been pioneering change for more than 60 years.
- [Time to Change](#): An online programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination, led by MIND and Rethink Mental Illness.
- [MIND](#): We provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.
- [Place2Be](#): A national charity providing emotional and therapeutic services in primary and secondary schools

Sites aimed at young people:

- [The Mix](#) (formerly known as Get Connected): Freephone and webchat for young people under 25.
- [Youth Access](#): For young people's information, advice and counselling
- [The Site](#)
- [My CAHMs choices](#): for young people with experience of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- [RiseAbove](#)

Sites aimed at parents and carers:

- [MindEd](#): E-learning to support young healthy minds
- [Family Lives](#): Parenting and Family Support
- [The Who Cares? Trust](#): Charity that supports young people in care

6. Partnerships

Who are the delivery partners?

Reading Well for young people is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians and the Association of Senior Children's and Education Libraries. It is funded by Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust.

Who are the supporting health partners?

The scheme is supported by British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, The British Psychological Society, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England (Children and Young People's Mental Health), Public Health England, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.

7. Launch of Reading Well for young people in libraries

When will Reading Well for young people be available in libraries?

Reading Well for young people launches nationally on 12 April 2016 with a stakeholder event at the Wellcome Trust, London; speakers include the Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP, Minister of State for Community and Social Care and Natasha Devon, Department for Education Mental Health Champion. The booklist and promotion material are under embargo until this date. Library authorities are encouraged to hold local launches from 13 April onwards.

How will GPs and other health professionals be informed about the scheme

Library authorities are encouraged to contact local health partners to inform them of the new Reading Well for young people scheme, using resources such as the commissioning guide and template GP letter.

The national press release will be circulated to specialist health press contacts on launch of the scheme. Reading Well for young people will also be promoted to health professionals through blog posts on health partners' websites and through newsletters and mailings to their members, as well as through presentations and stalls at high-profile health conferences across the country.

8. Extent of library involvement

To what extent will English library authorities be supporting Reading Well for young people?

Reading Well for young people is part of SCL's Public Library Universal Health Offer and ASCEL's Children's and Young People's Promise. In April 2016, the scheme is being launched in 90% of English library authorities.

Reading Well Books on Prescription (including the schemes for adult mental health, for people with dementia and their carers, and for young people's mental health) is now available in 97% of English library authorities.

Can community managed libraries be involved?

Community managed libraries are eligible to run Reading Well for young people as long as they meet delivery guidelines. They must:

- Contact their local library authority to explore ways they can work together to deliver the scheme (to obtain correct contact details please email readingwell@readinagency.org.uk).
- Stock the full collection of 35 Reading Well for young people titles in sufficient quantities to ensure adequate provision for the target audience
- Partner with appropriate health professionals who are able to recommend titles and support young people in understanding and managing their conditions.
- Help young people find local reading group activity through Reading Groups for Everyone (www.readinggroups.org) and further volunteering and creative activities through Reading Hack (www.readinghack.org)
- Purchase appropriate quantities of the Reading Well user leaflet to ensure young people are fully informed about the scheme and where to go for further support. The leaflet and other print resources can be ordered from: <http://shop.readingagency.org.uk/>

Can NHS libraries be involved?

NHS libraries are eligible to run the scheme as long as they meet delivery guidelines. They must follow the same delivery guidelines as community managed libraries and must also:

- Signpost users and health professionals to local library services
- Signpost users and health professionals to other wellbeing services provided by their organisation and/or community

Can school and college libraries be involved?

School libraries are eligible to run the scheme as long as they meet delivery guidelines. They must follow the same delivery guidelines as community managed libraries and must also:

- Signpost students, teachers and pastoral care staff to local library services
- Signpost students to other health and wellbeing services provided in the school or college, such as counselling and school nurses, as well as other community mental health support for young people

9. Co-ordination of Reading Well for young people

What role does The Reading Agency play?

The Reading Agency acts as the central point of contact for the scheme, managing its delivery, co-ordination, communications, national partnerships and development plan in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians and the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians.

What role do public library authorities play?

Public library authorities are the local co-ordinating agencies for the scheme and manage local partnership development. Public libraries manage book stock and resources and act as the contact point for enquiries from local GPs and other health professionals wishing to become involved. It is a local decision as to whether libraries charge health professionals for materials.

How will the scheme be delivered consistently in all libraries?

As noted in the Resources section of these FAQs, a variety of library resources – including an e-learning module – are available to support consistent delivery of Reading Well for young people across all

authorities. Library services are asked to comply with the guidelines for the scheme (as outlined in this document), although there is also scope to adapt these to suit local circumstances.

What library concessions support the scheme?

Some authorities currently offer free reservations for Reading Well titles as well as easy library joining for people with signed recommendations from health professionals. SCL have agreed that all authorities should aim to deliver these concessions if possible whilst recognising that this is dependent on local policy.

Should there be a Reading Well for young people book collection in every library?

Some authorities have purchased collections for all library service points, including mobiles and prison libraries. It is recognised that this level of provision will not be possible for all authorities. The guidelines for the scheme require that books are available through every library service point supported by the interlibrary loan system.

Are the titles available as e-books and in other formats?

Currently, 57% of the titles on the Reading Well for young people list are available for e-lending. Other formats such as audio and large print are also available for some titles. See the [formats spreadsheet](#) for further details.

10. Prescribing partnerships

How do GPs and other health and social care professionals take part?

Prescribing partners, including GPs, schools nurses, school counsellors, CYP IAPT practitioners, as well as service providers for young people, including youth centre and youth club managers and Girlguiding and Scouting leaders.

In recognition of the pressures on library budgets, health professionals are also encouraged to purchase supporting materials such as posters and leaflets.

GPs and other health professionals can refer young people to the books in the Reading Well collection using the recommended reading form in the user leaflet as part of a supported treatment programme.

11. Digital platforms

Where can library staff and health professionals find online information and resources related to Reading Well for young people?

Information and resources for library staff and health professionals are available on the [Reading Well](#) website. A monthly Reading Well newsletter for libraries provides updates on the scheme; please contact readingwell@readinagency.org.uk if you would like to be added to this mailing list.

Where can young people find online information about Reading Well?

Information about the scheme for young people can be found at www.reading-well.org.uk/shelfhelp. Please note, this redirects to the [Reading Hack](#) website where all digital content about the scheme for young people will be featured. If you are signposting young people to the scheme please use this URL.

What role will local library websites play?

Local websites may wish to replicate some of the material on the Reading Well website. They are also likely to carry local information and contacts for the scheme as well as signpost local resources and relevant agencies. Please see the branding guidelines [link] for further information about branding and descriptor text when promoting the scheme online.

Supporting print materials for Reading Well for young people, as well as the other Reading Well Books on Prescription schemes, can be ordered from [The Reading Agency shop](#).

How can materials be used to promote the scheme?

Promotional materials can be used for local launches, health and wellbeing events and library displays. **User leaflets** should always be made available close to where Reading Well titles are displayed. Promotional material can also be shared with local partners.

Who can we work with to promote the scheme?

Library authorities may wish to consider contacting the following:

- GP surgeries
- Providers of mental health services for young people, e.g. CAMHS and CYP IAPT practitioners
- Local schools and colleges. You may like to contact school library staff, head teachers, PSHE and pastoral care staff, form tutors, school nurses and school counsellors, to make them aware of the scheme and encourage its promotion to students through school communications.
- Local youth groups, for instance: local sports, music and drama groups for young people, Girlguiding and Scouting groups, Duke of Edinburgh and Arts Award participants, Young Farmers, religious youth groups.

Young people who are most at risk of mental health conditions. The [YoungMinds website](#) details those groups of young people, who are most vulnerable to problems with their mental health and wellbeing, including looked after children, unemployed young people, and BAME and LGBT groups. This is a useful resource to consider when thinking about where to promote the scheme in your local area.

12. Future Plans

Will the Reading Well for young people list be reviewed?

The titles on the Reading Well for young people book list will be reviewed after 3 years.

What are the future plans for Reading Well Books on Prescription?

In 2016, work will start on the development of a new reading list for people with long-term conditions. The list will provide self-help support and advice on the physical and mental health aspects of living with conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. The booklist will launch in April 2017. A refresh of the common mental health conditions list for adults is planned for the following year.

13. Evaluation

How has the scheme been measured?

The reach and impact of Reading Well Books on Prescription have been measured through two evaluations, completed following the first and second years of the scheme. Data was gathered through library and

health professional surveys, a survey of book issues, PLR data and publisher sales data, as well as service user surveys. A number of [case studies](#) with libraries, health professionals and service users have also been conducted.

Evaluation has shown that the scheme reached almost half a million people in its first two years. Read the [first-year](#) and [second-year reports](#) for further information.

How will the scheme be measured in the future?

For the first two evaluations, Reading Well Books on Prescription data was gathered from June to May. However, from 2016, data will be collected in line with the financial year, from April to March (this means that the third-year evaluation will overlap by three months with the second-year one).

Existing survey tools will be used for the third-year evaluation of the scheme, which will focus only on the schemes for adult mental health and for people with dementia and their carers. A more in-depth qualitative evaluation of users of the scheme is also being commissioned.

A qualitative evaluation of the Reading Well for young people by the University of Westminster and funded by the Wellcome Trust is in development.