

## Reading Well for long term conditions: FAQs for library staff

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# 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 (SCL) with funding from Arts Council England and Wellcome. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered by public libraries.

To find out more, download our [Books on Prescription handbook](#).

## What is Reading Well for long term conditions?

Reading Well for long term conditions provides information and support for people living with a long term health condition and their carers. The books provide quality-assured information about common conditions and symptoms, practical advice for living with a long term condition and support for self-management.

[The booklist](#) covers general information about living with a long term condition, as well as a focus on conditions such as diabetes and stroke, as well as common symptoms such as pain and fatigue. The list also includes titles to support the carers, friends and families of people living with a long term condition. The books are available for anyone to borrow from public libraries. They can also be recommended by health professionals to support treatment.

## How does it work?

Health professionals offering support to people with long term conditions can use the scheme to recommend helpful reading. The scheme can also be used on a self-referral basis. The books are available on the open shelves of the local public library for anyone to borrow from public libraries.

## How were the books chosen?

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

The original longlist was created as a result of mapping existing library collections and recommendations. It was supplemented by a number of recently published titles submitted by publishers. A book selection panel including people with experience of living with long term conditions as well as health and library professionals was created to review the titles. The selection panel worked alongside a group of people with long term physical health conditions and their carers to co-produce the book list and create the supporting print and digital resources.

The selection panel also reported to the Reading Well Health Experts Group, which represents key stakeholder organisations and partners. This group advises on the development of the overarching Reading Well Books on Prescription programme and individual schemes, alongside the SCL Library Health Group.

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

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



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Currently, 71% of the titles on the Reading Well for long term conditions list are available as e-books. Other formats such as audio and large print are also available for some titles. See the [format document](#) for further details.

## Can books be added to the list locally?

The core booklist has been endorsed by national partners so additional material cannot be added to the Reading Well for long term conditions 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.

## 2. The evidence base

### What is the evidence base for Reading Well for long term conditions?

Reading Well for long term conditions follows NICE guidelines on the following:

- Integrated care planning, self-management and support for carers of older people with long term conditions ([NG22](#)) which highlights the importance of health information provision for patients and carers at every stage of care plan development.
- NICE guidance on individual long term conditions consistently cites the importance of high-quality health information around treatment and management for patients, carers and families from diagnosis onwards. High quality, defined by NICE, means individually tailored to the patient's level of understanding and designed to be accessible.

For further information about the evidence base, please see the existing Reading Well [evidence base](#), or download our [consultation document](#).

## 3. The need

### Is there a need for such a service?

There is enormous need for quality assured health information and advice supporting people to understand and manage the physical and mental symptoms of living with a long term condition. A recent set of statistics produced by NHS England reports the following:<sup>1</sup>

- Over **26 million** people in England report to have at least one long term condition<sup>2</sup>
- Only **59%** of people living with long term conditions are in work, compared with **72%** of the general population

<sup>1</sup> [Long-term conditions metrics infographic - NHS England \(2016\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Prevention for adults with long term conditions, Social Care Institute for Excellence \(2016\)](#)

- Long term conditions account for **50%** of all GP appointments, **64%** of all hospital outpatients appointments and **70%** of all hospital bed days
- They also account for **70%** of health and care spend
- **Only 64%** of people living with long term conditions say they feel supported
- On average people living with long term conditions spend just four hours a year with a health professional and **8,756 hours** self-managing
- **80%** of carers report that caring for someone living with a long term condition has had a negative impact on their health. In addition, **£1 billion** in carer's allowance is unclaimed each year

Reading Well is a cost effective way of delivering community-based help and support for people living with long term conditions. The national cost average of the scheme works out at around **£1 per person**.

## 4. Conditions covered

### What conditions are covered by Reading Well for long term conditions?

The list covers:

- Arthritis
- Bowel conditions including Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Crohn's Disease
- Breathing difficulties including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and asthma
- Diabetes
- Heart disease including coronary heart disease, angina and heart attack
- Stroke

As well as associated symptoms of living with a long term condition including:

- Pain
- Fatigue
- Sleeping difficulties
- Mental health and wellbeing

The booklist also features titles that cover:

- General information and advice on living well with a long term condition
- Support for family and carers

### Useful statistics about the specific conditions covered

#### Arthritis

- Affects 10 million people in the UK

- One of the most common causes of disability<sup>3</sup>

#### **Bowel conditions**

- IBS affects up to 20% of the population at any one time<sup>4</sup>
- Up to 115,00 people in the UK are affected by Crohn's disease<sup>5</sup>

#### **Diabetes**

- An estimated 4.5 million people are living with diabetes in the UK
- Around 700 people a day are diagnosed with diabetes - the equivalent of one person every two minutes<sup>6</sup>

#### **Breathing difficulties**

- 5.4 million people in the UK are currently receiving treatment for asthma<sup>7</sup>
- An estimated 1.2 million people are living with diagnosed Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)<sup>8</sup>

#### **Heart disease**

- Coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the UK
- An estimated 7 million people in the UK are living with heart disease<sup>9</sup>

#### **Stroke**

- Stroke occurs approximately 152,000 times a year in the UK; one every 3 minutes 27 seconds
- There are over 1.2 million stroke survivors in the UK<sup>10</sup>

## **5. Resources**

### **What resources are available to support delivery of the scheme?**

Resources currently available to support library staff delivering Reading Well for long term conditions include:

- Printed promotional material – user leaflets, posters, postcards, stickers, pop-up banners and dump bins – is available to order from [The Reading Agency shop](#)
- [Interactive prescriber leaflet](#)
- [Booklist with format availability](#)
- [An overview of the titles](#)
- [PowerPoint presentation](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Data and statistics, Arthritis Research UK](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Irritable Bowel Syndrome \(IBS\), NHS Choices](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Statistics, Crohn's and Colitis UK](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Facts and figures, Diabetes UK](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Asthma facts and statistics, Asthma UK](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease \(COPD\) statistics, British Lung Foundation](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Key facts & figures, Heart UK](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Stroke statistics, Stroke Association](#)

- [Commissioning guidelines](#)
- [Background information about the scheme](#)
- [JPEG image of the poster](#)
- [Book jacket composite](#)
- [Animated gif](#)
- [Branding guidelines](#)
- [Sharable image bank](#)

## 6. Partnerships

### Who are the delivery partners?

Reading Well for long term conditions is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL). It is funded by Arts Council England and Wellcome.

### Who are the supporting health partners?

Reading Well for long term conditions is supported by British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, British Heart Foundation, British Lung Foundation, The British Psychological Society, Carers Trust, Carers UK, Diabetes UK, Health Education England, The IBS Network, The Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Association of Primary Care, Public Health England, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Self Management UK, The Stroke Association.

## 7. Prescribing partnerships

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

Health professionals will be informed of the scheme via the partnership communications strategy managed by The Reading Agency and SCL. Health professionals will be directed to contact their local library service if they wish to sign up to the scheme. The Reading Agency will direct any sign-up enquiries it receives to the relevant service via the agreed contact point.

GPs and other health professionals can refer people to books in the Reading Well collection using the recommended reading form in the user leaflet as part of a supported treatment programme. In recognition of the pressures on library budgets, health professionals are also encouraged to purchase supporting materials such as posters and leaflets.

## 8. Digital platforms

### Where can library staff and health professionals find online information and resources related to Reading Well for long term conditions?



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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@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:readingwell@readingagency.org.uk) if you would like to be added to this mailing list.

### **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](#) for further information about branding and descriptor text when promoting the scheme online.

Supporting print materials for Reading Well for long term conditions, 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.

## **9. Future Plans**

### **When will the Reading Well for long term conditions list be reviewed?**

The titles on the Reading Well for long term conditions book list will be reviewed after 3 years.

## **10. Evaluation**

### **How has the scheme been measured?**

The reach and impact of Reading Well Books on Prescription has been measured through three 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 has reached 635,000 people since 2013.

- [Reading Well Books on Prescription Evaluation Report 2013-14](#)
- [Reading Well Books on Prescription Evaluation 2014-15](#)
- [Reading Well Books on Prescription Evaluation 2015-16](#)

### **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 was collected in line with the financial year, from April to March (this means that the third-year evaluation overlaps by three months with the second-year one).

The [fourth-year evaluation](#) of Books on Prescription is in process and will focus on the adult mental health, dementia and young people's schemes.

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



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