

Reading Well Books on Prescription: guide for prescribers

About Reading Well Books on Prescription

Reading Well provides accredited and helpful reading to support health and wellbeing. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered in public libraries. The scheme is being rolled out in Wales with funding from the Welsh Government and in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians Cymru. There are currently **2 Reading Well booklists** available in all 22 Welsh library authorities: [Reading Well Books on Prescription for mental health](#) and [Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia](#).

The booklists provide:

- Information and advice for managing conditions or dealing with difficult feelings and experiences
- Support following diagnosis
- Suggestions for shared activities
- Support and practical advice for carers
- Personal accounts of people with lived experience and their relatives and carers

You can download digital user leaflets containing the booklists from reading-well.org.uk/resources/wales:

- [Dementia English language leaflet](#)
- [Mental health bilingual leaflet](#)
- [Dementia Welsh language leaflet](#)

The titles on the list are detailed in the user leaflets and are also available via our website: reading-well.org.uk/wales

The Books on Prescription model originated in Wales and Reading Well is a development of this original model. The original Book Prescription Wales programme is no longer in circulation. For information about the history and development of Books on Prescription [please see our website](#).

The Reading Agency is working with the Books Council of Wales to translate books on the list into Welsh; book collections and supporting materials will be made available from libraries in both English and Welsh.

How does it work?

A health professional or individual provider can make a reading recommendation with the user leaflet. Digital copies can be downloaded at reading-well.org.uk/resources/wales. Print versions are available from local library services. People then take their book recommendations to their local library, where the titles can be borrowed for free. If the book is not immediately available, it can be reserved. Free reservations are available in most libraries. Books can also be selected directly from the library without a recommendation.

Many of the Reading Well titles are also available to borrow from the library as e-books and audiobooks. Users can [visit their local library website](#) to join the library free of charge and find Reading Well books in the online catalogue. A full list of the e-lending availability of the Reading Well books can be found [here](#).

Who can recommend books?

Health, social care and voluntary sector professionals can use the scheme to support users. People can also self-refer, or refer others via the user leaflets. Books can be used before, during or after diagnosis and to support family and carers.

How are the books selected?

The books have all been recommended by health professionals as well as people with lived experience of the conditions and topics covered, and their relatives and carers. They have been selected using guidelines and quality standards for health care from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. For more information about the book selection protocol, see <http://www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/525>.

Why are public libraries important for health and wellbeing?

Evidence shows that people see their library as a safe, trusted and non-stigmatising place to go for health information. As well as Reading Well Books on Prescription, they offer:

- Health information and signposting
- Social and recreational activities such as reading groups and self-help groups
- Reminiscence collections
- Assisted digital access

Does it work?

Since 2013, a total of over 1.2 million people have borrowed 2.3 million Reading Well titles from their public library, and the scheme has been endorsed by the public as well as by GPs, mental health professionals and government ministers as a helpful community-based health service.

It has also delivered significant patient benefit. In a recent survey, 90% of those who borrowed a book from the Reading Well lists said it had been helpful. Find out more about the most recent evaluation of the scheme (2018/19) [here](#).

National partnerships

The scheme is supported by Anxiety UK, Alzheimer's Society, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, The British Psychological Society, Carers UK, Dementia UK, Health Education England, Innovations in Dementia, Mental Health First Aid, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England (IAPT), OCD Action, Public Health England, Public Health Wales, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal Society of Public Health, Self Management UK.

Keeping in touch

For regular updates and resources to help you deliver the scheme, please email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk to sign up to the Reading Well Wales mailing list. This is the primary method of communication with Reading Well partners and our bimonthly newsletters provide the most up-to-date information on the scheme and its delivery in Wales.