As part of the successful Reading Well scheme, The Reading Agency and Society of Chief Librarians Cymru are launching a new Reading Well Books on Prescription for mental health booklist in Wales. The scheme has been developed with leading health organisations, people with lived experience and their carers.

It will be available in all 22 Welsh public library authorities from 26 June 2019.

About Reading Well Books on Prescription

Reading Well provides accredited and helpful reading to support health and wellbeing. It is delivered by The Reading Agency working in partnership with Libraries Connected, with funding from the Welsh Government, Arts Council England and Wellcome. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered in public libraries. The Reading Agency has been awarded funding from the Welsh Government to roll out Reading Well in Welsh libraries in partnership with the Welsh network of Libraries Connected, the Society of Chief Librarians Cymru. Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia was launched in Wales in July 2018.

The booklist

The booklist of 37 titles provides adults living with mental health needs with advice, information and support including self-help, psycho-education and memoir. The list covers:

Introductions to therapies and approaches including:

- Mindfulness
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Common feelings and experiences including:

- Anger
- Bereavement and loss
- Low self-esteem
- Social anxiety and shyness
- Sleep problems
- Stress
Self-help books recommended to support psychological therapy including:

- General wellbeing titles
- Depression
- Anxiety and panic
- Obsessions and compulsions

Support for other common conditions including:

- Binge eating and bulimia nervosa
- Body image and body dysmorphic disorder
- Mood swings
- Depression and relationships
- Postnatal depression

Personal stories from people who are living with or caring for someone with mental health needs.

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

The Books on Prescription model was originally developed in Wales and Reading Well is a development of this original model. The Reading Agency is working with the Welsh Books Council to translate books on the lists 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 mental health service provider can make a reading recommendation with the user leaflet. Print versions of the user leaflet have been distributed to health boards and are also available from local library services. Bilingual digital versions of the user leaflet can be downloaded from our website.

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 and Reading Well books have an extended loan period of 6 weeks. Books can also be selected directly from the library without a prescription.

**Who can recommend books?**

Health and social care professionals offering support to people with mental health needs can use the scheme to recommend helpful reading. People can also self-refer, or refer others via the user leaflets. The books will be available on the open shelves of the local public library for anyone to borrow. Books can be used before, during or after diagnosis and to support family and carers.
How were the books selected?

Reading Well follows clinical guidelines for the treatment and support of mental health and wellbeing. Specific self-help interventions are included when recommended within NICE guidelines.

The books were selected by health professionals following a rigorous and evidence-based approach. Some of the titles have been specifically endorsed by the NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme as suitable for supporting treatment. The scheme has been co-produced with people with lived experience of mental health needs and their relatives and carers. Click here for more information about the book selection protocol.

Does it work?

Since the launch of the scheme in England, 931,000 people have borrowed over 2 million Reading Well books. 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 have borrowed a book said it had been helpful. You can read the full evaluation from 2017-2018 here. Impact data from the Welsh scheme will be available in October 2019.

National partnerships

Reading Well Books on Prescription for mental health is supported by Anxiety UK, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, British Psychological Society, Carers UK, Health Education England, Mental Health First Aid England, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England (IAPT), OCD Action, Public Health England, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal Society of Public Health and Self Management UK.

Keeping in touch

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