

READING WELL

What is Reading Well?

Reading Well is a national scheme supporting people to understand and manage their health and wellbeing using helpful reading. The books on our reading lists can be recommended by a health professional and taken free of charge from a local library, or users can self-refer and borrow the titles as they would any other library book.

The books are all [chosen and recommended by health experts](#), as well as by people with lived experience of the conditions and topics covered and their relatives and carers. **There are five booklists available that are targeted at different age groups:**



- [Reading Well for mental health](#)
- [Reading Well for long term conditions](#)
- [Reading Well for dementia](#)
- [Reading Well for children](#) (primary schools)
- [Reading Well for young people](#) (secondary schools)

Reading Well is run by The Reading Agency in partnership with Libraries Connected as a key strand of the public library [Universal Health Offer](#). The scheme is available in 99% of English public library authorities.

The books for children and young people aim to support good mental health and wellbeing, with titles dealing with specific conditions like anxiety and depression as well as difficult experiences including bullying, exam stress and bereavement.

Can schools get involved?

Yes! Many schools deliver the scheme already and we are keen to support more. You can:

- [Visit our website](#) to browse the booklists aimed at primary and secondary schools
- You can order booklist leaflets and promotional materials from [our online shop](#) in order to signpost students to their local library service where they can access the books for free.
- Acquire the book collections via your usual suppliers. Many suppliers allow all the titles in a collection to be purchased together. You can [download a spreadsheet](#) containing all the book titles as ISBNs from our [resources bank](#). You could also link up with your local public library to borrow a collection for your school. [Email us](#) if you would like us to facilitate this for you.
- Download [free supporting resources](#) from our bank, including an [assembly presentation](#) and [classroom activities](#).
- If you are seeking funding for book collections or supporting resources, many schools have secured local public health funding. We recommend using the below information on need and impact to secure funding.

The need

There is **enormous need** for quality assured health information, advice, and stories to support children and young people to understand and manage their mental health and wellbeing:

- **One in eight** (12.8%) 5 to 19 year olds had **at least one mental health condition** when assessed in 2017.
- **Over a third** of parents of children aged 4-11 (34%) **worry about their child's mental health** at least once a week, and these worries appear well placed as almost two thirds (60%) of children aged 8-11 say they feel stressed, sad or worried at least once a month.
- There has been an **increase over time in the prevalence** of mental health needs in 5 to 15 year olds. Rising from 9.7% in 1999 and 10.1% in 2004, to 11.2% in 2017.
- Schools are on average making **183 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) referrals** every school day. **Most referrals** (56%) came from **primary schools**.
- Only a quarter (25.2%) of 5-19 year olds with a mental health condition had contact with mental health specialists in the past year, meaning that three-quarters hadn't had any contact with mental health services.

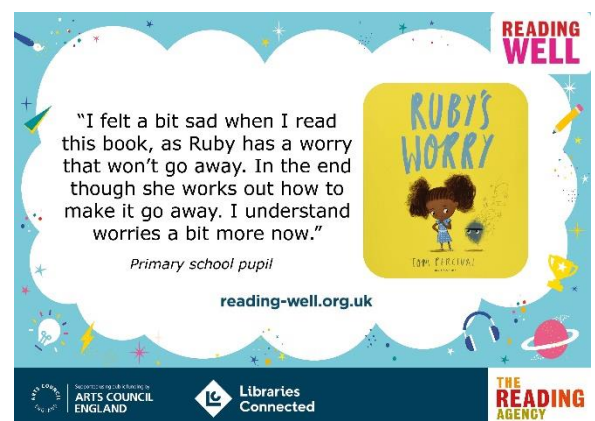
How do schools benefit?

- Reading Well for children has been mapped against key priorities outlined in the **2018 government Green paper** on Transforming Children's and Young People's Mental Health Provision including prevention and early intervention.
- The scheme provides evidence-based interventions for common mental health needs, e.g. anxiety, depression, behaviour problems, as well as support for children and young people who experience traumatic events, bereavement etc.
- Reading Well is a 'shelf ready' resource that has been clinically endorsed by experts; staff do not need to be familiar with the books themselves to feel comfortable recommending books from the list as part of their wellbeing provision.

Impact

The scheme has been supported 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 young people would recommend their Reading Well book for support with dealing with difficult feelings and experiences.

Further detail on the findings of external evaluations and our case studies are [available on our website](#).



What do I need to do next?

Here's a checklist to get you set up to deliver Reading Well:

- ✓ Order [the book collections](#) from your usual suppliers
- ✓ Order leaflets + promotional materials from [our online shop](#) (digital and print options available)
- ✓ Read our [delivery model](#) for guidelines on delivering the scheme
- ✓ Encourage your student support services to signpost students to the scheme
- ✓ [Download digital resources](#) to help you deliver the scheme, e.g. social media artwork/toolkits
- ✓ Email us at readingwell@readingagency.org.uk to:
 - Register as a Reading Well school
 - Be put in touch with your local library to see [how you can work together](#) to deliver Reading Well

Visit reading-well.org.uk/get-involved or email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk for further guidance and information on delivering the scheme.



Reading Well is supported by the Anna Freud Centre, Anxiety UK, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP), British Heart Foundation, British Lung Foundation, British Psychological Society (BPS), Carers Trust, Carers UK, Health Education England, IBS Network, 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 Paediatrics and Child Health, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal Society of Public Health, Self Management UK and Stroke Association.