

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:**



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

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.

Can colleges and universities get involved?

Yes! Many schools, colleges and universities deliver the scheme already and we're keen to support more. You can:

- [Visit our website](#) to browse the booklists.
- 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](#) with 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 institution. [Email us](#) if you would like us to facilitate this for you.
- If you are seeking funding for book collections or supporting resources, many 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 students to understand and manage their mental health and wellbeing:

- Recent statistics reveal the extent of the student mental health crisis in the UK. In 2015/16, over 15,000 first-year students in UK universities reported that they had a mental health problem, compared to approximately 3,000 in 2006.
- This increase in disclosure is mirrored by a 94% of higher education institutions reporting an increase in demand for their counselling services. Despite the surge in help-seeking behaviour, there is evidence to suggest that there are many more students who do not seek treatment for mental health problems.

- There are a range of implications of worsening mental health among students. Poor mental health has been associated with poorer academic outcomes⁷, as students tend to be less able to effectively manage stress and pressure and, thus, their ability to perform given tasks productively is diminished.⁸

How do colleges and universities benefit?

- Reading Well has been mapped against key priorities outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan.
- The scheme provides evidence-based interventions for common mental health needs, e.g. anxiety and depression as well as support for who experience traumatic events including bereavement.
- 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. [Find out more](#) about how the scheme is currently being used in universities.

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](#).

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"I found it really helpful to be able to take the book home and work on it in my own time. The fact that it got me doing some of the exploration and understanding work made me feel as if I'd got some control back. In fact, I found myself looking forward to reading it, and I went on to renew it for another three weeks."

Reading Well participant

reading-well.org.uk

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
Libraries Connected
THE READING AGENCY

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, or [contact us](#) to be linked up with your local public library
- ✓ Order leaflets and 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 using the leaflets
- ✓ [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/college/university
 - 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.