

# 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 teens](#) (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 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has funded a universal roll out of the [Reading Well for mental health](#) and [Reading Well for children](#) booklists to **every library service** across England to support public mental health and wellbeing.

## How does it work?

The books on our expert endorsed reading lists can be recommended by a link worker or other health/social care/voluntary sector professional and taken free of charge from a local library, or users can self-refer and borrow the titles like any other library book.

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

## 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, they offer:

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



## Impact

"I learned so much from these books - how to raise and maintain my self-esteem, to problem-solve successfully, to manage stress and how to take care of myself. I took notes, so I could keep reminding myself of what to do."

*Reading Well participant*



[reading-well.org.uk](http://reading-well.org.uk)

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND Librarians Connected THE READING AGENCY

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Since 2013, over 3.3 million Reading Well books have been issued from public libraries, 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, 91% of those who borrowed a book from the Reading Well lists said it had been helpful, and 90% of health professionals valued the scheme as a resource that helps them

support people outside of consultation time.

## How can health professionals and link workers get involved?

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

- ✓ [Get in touch with your local library](#) to signpost to the [Reading Well book collections](#) or you can order books from your usual suppliers or via [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org)
- ✓ Visit our [resources bank](#) to download materials, artwork and training to support the scheme
- ✓ 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](mailto:readingwell@readingagency.org.uk) to:
  - Register as a Reading Well prescriber
  - 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](http://reading-well.org.uk/get-involved) or email [readingwell@readingagency.org.uk](mailto: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.



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