

Reading Well Books on Prescription Prescriber Handbook



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Section 1: About Reading Well Books on Prescription

What is the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme?

Reading Well Books on Prescription provides helpful reading for adults experiencing a variety of health conditions. The scheme is endorsed by health professionals and supported by English public libraries. It was launched in 2013 as the first national scheme for England with a list of evidence-based self-help books on common mental health conditions.

What is Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia?

Available in English public libraries from February 2015, Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia recommends reading to improve people's understanding and awareness of dementia in its various forms.

The core book list includes professionally endorsed information and advice for people diagnosed with dementia and their carers, as well as support with how to live well with the condition. Books can be recommended by GPs, health professionals and dementia service providers from a core list. The books are available from the public library where they can be borrowed free of charge.

How does it work?

A health professional or dementia service provider can make a reading recommendation using the form that is attached to the user guide. Print versions of the user guide are available from local library services, and copies can be downloaded in digital form at reading-well.org.uk. 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 prescription.

Who can recommend books?

Health and social care professionals who provide dementia care can use the scheme. Books can be used before, during or after diagnosis and to support family and carers.

How is the book list structured?

The core book list of 25 titles provides:

- Information and advice about dementia
- Support following diagnosis
- Support and practical advice for carers
- Personal accounts of people with dementia and their relatives and carers
- Suggestions for shared activities.

For more about the book list, see: www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/dementia For a guide to each of the individual titles, see www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/health-professionals

Is normal ageing included?

The scheme focuses on dementia, but it also includes information about normal ageing and memory problems that may not be dementia-related.

How were the books selected?

The books have all been recommended by health professionals and people who have dementia or are caring for someone with the condition. They have been selected using guidelines and quality standards for dementia care from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. For more information about the book selection protocol, see www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/525

Section 2: How do prescribers use the scheme?

Who is Reading Well Books on Prescription suitable for?

The scheme has been developed for people with dementia and their carers. It is also helpful in raising public awareness of the causes and symptoms of the condition and contributing to the creation of dementia-friendly communities.

Book-based support will not be suitable for everyone. The scheme is aimed at people who are able to read and manage book-based content. We have tried to make the scheme as accessible as possible by including material for a range of reading levels; for people with a learning disability; and for carers with English as a second language.

Some of the titles on the dementia list are available in other formats including e-books and audiobooks, although availability depends on individual libraries' collections. For more information about format availability, see www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/health-professionals

Recommending a book

Where a health or social care professional feels that Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia can help, they should discuss the scheme with the person with dementia or his or her carer. If the patient or carer is interested, the prescriber can consider the core book list with them and tick the titles that are most appropriate. We have produced a summary of the contents of each title to help prescribers make the right recommendations. The core list is available in hard copy as part of the user leaflet. This leaflet is also available digitally along with an electronic prescription form. All of these resources can be found at www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/health-professionals

Recommend a book by ticking the relevant circle on the reading list in the patient information leaflet, or by completing the online prescription form. It is important to add the prescriber's details to the form, as this will help the patient to join the library if he or she is not already a member. There is space on the recommendation form for any notes the prescriber may wish to make about other resources or treatment.

It is recommended that patients receive a patient information leaflet as part of the consultation, as this tells them about the scheme and how it works. There is also a useful short guide for the public on how to get the most out of the reading recommended by the scheme; see www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/readers

What the patient does

The patient takes the recommendation to his or her local library where it can be exchanged for the book, although some people prefer to borrow the title without handing in the prescription. Books can be borrowed without a recommendation form.

If the book is not available, it will be reserved for the patient and made available as soon as possible, usually within 48 hours. In most library authorities there is no charge for this service, though this will depend on local practice. If a patient is not a member of the library, he or she will be able to join immediately if they have a recommendation form signed by the prescriber.

Self-referral

People can also use Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia by independently choosing relevant books from the list and from the collections in the library. All titles have been professionally accredited and quality endorsed. The Reading Well Books on Prescription user guide includes appropriate referral advice for people not currently receiving dementia care.

What the prescriber does

The prescriber should record use of the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme on the patient's records and follow up as part of treatment.

Section 3: The evidence base

Does it work?

There is already a strong evidence base for the effectiveness of the Reading Well Books on Prescription model in providing support for common mental health conditions. For evidence, see

readingagency.org.uk/readingwell/evidencebase and readingagency.org.uk/adults/impact/research/reading-well-books-on-prescription.html

Clinical guidelines

Improving dementia services and quality of care is a key priority of the Department of Health's National Dementia Strategy. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE CG 42) recommends that dementia care should:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of dementia
- Offer practical advice about services
- Provide support following diagnosis and with early memory loss
- Support carers practically, emotionally and mentally
- Encourage people to remain independent and active
- Enhance quality of care.

The books on the Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia scheme have been recommended by experts and people with experience of dementia as providing quality-assured support in these areas. For more about the evidence base, see www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/health-professionals and readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPdementiaconsultationpaper.pdf

Section 4: Resources

Available resources

Available resources include:

- A Reading Well Books on Prescription user guide containing the core book list prescriber recommendation form. This is available in hard copy from local library services and online in read-only form at www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/health-professionals. Leaflets are also available at shop.readingagency.org.uk
- Downloadable prescriber recommendation form and booklist at www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/health-professionals
- Posters in A3 and A4 posters format available at shop.readingagency.org.uk
- Reading Well Books on Prescription website containing a range of further resources for professionals. See www.reading-well.org.uk

Does the scheme provide value for money?

Community-based and self-help support such as that provided by Reading Well Books on Prescription provides cost-effective support and adds value to existing dementia service provision. The national average cost of Reading Well Books on Prescription is £1 per person.

Can the scheme be commissioned?

Active commissioning partnerships with library services are being developed. Around a third of library services have now been commissioned by local authority public health partners to deliver Reading Well Books on Prescription. There is also developing interest from clinical commissioning groups. Further information for commissioners interested in the scheme can be found at readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPfordementiacommissioningguide.pdf

The public library health service

The Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme is delivered by nearly all library authorities in England. Public library authorities are the local co-ordinating agencies for the scheme. They stock the core book collections, distribute leaflets to health professionals and act as local contact points.

Evidence shows that people see libraries as safe, trusted and non-stigmatised places to go for help with, and information about, health. Libraries play a key role in building dementia-friendly communities. Some offer:

- Reminiscence collections including historical objects, audio recordings, books, photographs and posters
- Social and recreational activities such as reading groups and self-help groups
- Information about local dementia services, support groups and reading groups
- Reading Well Books on Prescription collections for common mental health conditions
- Reading Well Mood-boosting Books – a national promotion of uplifting novels, poetry and non-fiction.

If you have not yet been in touch with your local library service and would like to know who to contact, please email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk

Section 5: Supporting partners

Core partners

Reading Well Books on Prescription is delivered by The Reading Agency, working in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians and local library services, and funded by Arts Council England.

- **The Reading Agency** is an independent charity with a mission to give everyone an equal chance in life by helping people become confident and enthusiastic readers. It runs national reading programmes and partnerships across the library network. It is funded by Arts Council England. See readingagency.org.uk
- **The Society of Chief Librarians** is a local government association made up of the chief librarians of each library authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, through sharing best practice, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service. See goscl.com
- **Arts Council England** champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries, from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspire us, bring us together and teach us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, they make life better. Between 2010 and 2015, Arts Council England will invest £1.9 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1.1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible. See artscouncil.org.uk

National health partners

The following health partners support the scheme:

- The Alzheimer's Society
- British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- The British Psychological Society
- Carers UK
- Dementia UK
- NHS England (IAPT)
- Innovations in Dementia
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Royal College of Nursing
- Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Section 6: Evaluation and further information

We are evaluating the uptake, prescriber value and patient impact of the scheme. If you are able to help us with this evaluation by completing a short survey, or by sharing your thoughts about the scheme, please contact us at readingwell@readingagency.org.uk. For any further information, email us or visit readingwell.org.uk