

Reading Well for young people

Background information

READING WELL

As part of its successful Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme, The Reading Agency, Society of Chief Librarians and the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians are launching **Reading Well for young people**. The scheme is part of SCL's Public Library Health Offer and ASCEL's Children's Promise and has been developed with young people and leading health organisations.

It will be available in public libraries from **April 2016**.

Reading Well Books on Prescription

Reading Well Books on Prescription provides accredited reading to support health and wellbeing, available from public libraries. It is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians with funding from Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered by public libraries.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions was launched in June 2013 as the first national scheme for England. A second scheme for people with dementia and their carers was launched in January 2015. The programme is a universal library offer available in 97% of public library authorities.

In a very successful first two years, the scheme has reached 445,000 people. Library issues of titles on the adult mental health list have increased by 97% while those on the dementia list have increased by 346%. It has been endorsed by the public as well as by GPs, mental health professionals and government ministers as a helpful community-based health service. Ninety percent of those who have borrowed a book from the mental health list say it has been helpful, while 85% say that reading the books have made them feel more confident about managing their symptoms. The evaluation report is available at:

readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPEvaluationReport2015.pdf

Reading Well for young people

The need

There is enormous need for quality assured mental health information and advice for young people. Contemporary pressures, such as widespread family breakdown, school exam stress, 24-hour social networking and an increase in bullying, have serious implications for the mental health of young people.

- 10% of children and young people have a diagnosable mental health condition. This represents three young people in every classroom¹

¹ www.hscic.gov.uk/pubs/mentalhealth04

- Rates of mental health problems among children increase as they reach adolescence to 13% of boys and 10% of girls²
- 1 in 10 young people deliberately harm themselves regularly³
- Nearly 300,000 young people in Britain have an anxiety disorder⁴
- 70% of children and young people have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age⁵
- Poor mental health for young people has serious implications for later life, affecting wellbeing and the ability to work and earn as adults

Reading Well for young people is a cost-effective way of delivering community-based mental health help and support for young people. The national cost average of the scheme works out at around £1 a person.

Booklist

A booklist of 35 titles has been developed to provide young people aged 13 to 18 with advice, information and support around common mental health conditions. The booklist features self-help, psycho-education, memoirs, graphic novels and fiction in the following areas:

- ADHD
- Anxiety, worry and panic
- Autism and Asperger syndrome
- Body image and eating disorders
- Bullying
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Depression
- Mood swings
- OCD
- Self-harm
- Stress

The booklist also features a number of general titles that cover:

- Bereavement
- Divorce and separation
- Sexuality
- Sleeping problems
- Substance abuse

² Mental Disorder More Common In Boys, National Statistics Online, 2004

³ Managing self-harm in young people, Royal College of Psychiatrists (CR192)

⁴ www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyouthinfo/youngpeople/worriesandanxieties.aspx

⁵ The Good Childhood Inquiry: health research evidence, Children's Society, 2008

How it works

Health professionals offering support to young people, such as GPs, CYP IAPT practitioners and school nurses, can use the scheme to recommend helpful reading. The scheme can also be used on a self-referral basis. The books are available on the open shelves for anyone to borrow from public libraries.

Evidence-based practice

Reading Well for young people follows NICE guidelines for common mental health issues and specific mental health issues within children and young people.

The books were selected by health professionals following a rigorous and evidence-based approach. The scheme has been co-created with young people.

National partnerships

The scheme is supported by British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, The British Psychological Society, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England (Children and Young People's Mental Health), Public Health England, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.

Resources

The Reading Well for young people list of 35 recommended books will be available in all English library authorities subscribing to the scheme. Leaflets containing the booklist, which can be used by health professionals to recommend titles, are also available from local library services. For contact details email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk

Why are public libraries important for supporting young people's mental health?

Evidence shows that people see their library as a safe, trusted and non-stigmatised place to go for health information. As well as Reading Well for young people, they offer:

- Reading Well Books on Prescription: a list of recommended reading for adults, which some young people may also find helpful. reading-well.org.uk
- Social and recreational activities such as reading groups
- Reading Hack: a national programme in public libraries for young people that aims to turn reading on its head. Young people can create their own hacks, meet new people, get new skills and inspire others to read through volunteering opportunities. readinghack.org.uk

About us

The Reading Agency is a leading independent charity whose pioneering work brings the joy of reading to the widest possible audiences across the UK, in partnership with the public library service. The charity's mission is to create and deliver innovative reading opportunities that inspire more people to read more, encourage them to share their enjoyment of reading with others and celebrate the difference that reading makes to all our lives. The Reading Agency is funded by the Arts Council. readingagency.org.uk

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) is a local government association made up of the chief librarian of each library authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, through sharing best practices, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service. goscl.com

The Association of Senior Children’s and Education Librarians (ASCEL) is the national membership network of senior managers in children’s and young people’s public library services and school library services in the UK. Its aim is to lead excellence in library services for children and young people and schools so that every child and young person visiting a public library is inspired by an exciting environment which makes reading for pleasure irresistible and every school has access to a high quality school library service. ascel.org.uk

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people’s 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 inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes 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 across the country. artscouncil.org.uk

The Wellcome Trust is an independent global charitable foundation dedicated to improving health, because good health makes life better. Since 1936, its support has helped to save and improve millions of lives around the world through science, research, evidence and engagement with society. wellcome.ac.uk

Contact

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- reading-well.org.uk