

## Reading Well fact sheet

[Reading Well](#) provides helpful reading to support health and wellbeing. The books are selected and recommended by leading health bodies and people living with the conditions covered.

The scheme delivered by [The Reading Agency](#) working in partnership with [Libraries Connected](#), with funding from [Arts Council England](#). The [Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport \(DCMS\)](#) has funded a universal roll-out of books from our reading lists to support mental health to every library service across England.

There are **five** Reading Well booklists:

### For adults:

- [Reading Well for mental health](#)
- [Reading Well for dementia](#)
- [Reading Well for long term conditions](#)

### For children and young people:

- [Reading Well for children](#)
- [Reading Well for young people or “Shelf Help”](#)

## How it works

Health and social care professionals, link workers, teachers and anyone else offering support 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 of the local public library for anyone to borrow.

### Public library health and wellbeing offer

Reading Well is a core strand of the Libraries Connected [public library health and wellbeing offer](#). Through the offer libraries promote healthy living provide self-management support and engagement opportunities for children and adults supported by welcoming spaces; effective signposting and information to reduce health, social and economic inequalities. They offer a range of creative and social activities which engage and connect individuals and communities, combat loneliness and improve wellbeing.

### Evidence-based practice

Reading Well follows clinical guidelines for the treatment and support of mental health and wellbeing. Specific self-help interventions are included when recommended within National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines.

The Reading Well book selection process draws on wide stakeholder consultation, existing best practice and expert advice, professional recommendations, and national clinical guidelines. Co-production with experts by experience is integral to the development process.

## Reach

- **2.6 million** Reading Well books have been borrowed from public libraries.
- **91%** of people surveyed found their book helpful or very helpful.
- **89%** of health professionals surveyed said the scheme helped them support people outside of consultation time.

## Impact

**There is enormous need for quality-assured health information, advice and stories to support people to manage their health and wellbeing.** Evaluation has shown that bibliotherapy is cost effective, elicits a positive response from people, improves self-management and results in better person - doctor relationships.<sup>1</sup> Reading Well collections can support people with quality-assured, evidence-based resources outside of clinical settings, or while they await treatment.

*"This book was incredibly helpful to me as it allowed me to understand why we feel a certain way at certain times. I also found that other people have used the same methods to cope and that I wasn't alone in my journey though getting help."* - Participant

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](#).

## Supporting organisations

**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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<sup>1</sup> 'Evidence Review of BOP and Creative Bibliotherapy Projects in Libraries', *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, D Chamberlain, vol 15 (2008)