

READING WELL

Reading Well for long-term conditions commissioning Guide

This guide is intended for commissioners of adult health and social care services.

Introduction

This guide provides information for health and care service commissioners on a new **Reading Well scheme for people with long-term conditions and their carers** delivered by public libraries. The scheme will provide quality assured information and advice. Reading Well for long-term conditions is part of the Reading Well Books on Prescription programme, more information can be found at www.reading-well.org.uk.

Reading Well

Reading Well provides **accredited reading to support health and wellbeing** available through English public libraries.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions was launched in 2013. A second scheme for people with dementia and their carers was launched in 2015, followed by a third list to support young people's mental health and wellbeing launched in 2016.

The programme complements existing health and wellbeing services and is a cost effective way of providing free, quality assured health information to local communities. Reading Well is currently available in 97% of English public library authorities, and is **often funded and delivered with local public health services**.



Reading Well for long-term conditions

Reading Well for long-term conditions will be launched in July 2017. It provides a booklist of 30-35 titles providing people living with long-term conditions and their carers with expert endorsed health information and self-management support.

The book list covers general information on living well with a long-term condition, titles on specific conditions (Diabetes, Arthritis, COPD, Asthma, Heart disease, Angina, Irritable Bowel Syndrome and

Stroke), symptom-based titles (mental health related to living with a long-term condition, sleeping difficulties, fatigue and pain management) and titles for family and carers. It also includes fiction and personal stories related to living with a long-term condition.

If you would like to see the book list please email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk.

Please note the list is embargoed until the scheme launches on **3 July 2017** during [Health Information Week](#).

How have the books been selected?

The books have been selected through a rigorous process by a panel of experts by profession and experience. The book selection protocol can be downloaded at www.reading-well.org.uk. The scheme has also been developed in consultation with people with experience of living with long-term conditions, facilitated by the [Coalition for Collaborative Care](#).

Support from health partners

Health partners endorsing the Reading Well programme include:

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, The British Psychological Society, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England, Public Health England, Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal College of Nursing.

How it works

Health professionals, such as GPs and those working within health and social care, as well as anyone providing support for people with long-term conditions, can recommend titles. The books are available to take out the local public library.

Professionals might find the scheme useful to encourage self-management and self-care, as well as supporting joint decision-making between the patient and their care professionals.

The scheme can also be used on a self-referral basis. The books are available on the open shelves in public libraries and free for anyone to borrow. Signposting to further healthcare services is provided within the user guide and again on the Reading Well website (www.reading-well.org.uk).



Evidence-based practice

Reading Well for long-term conditions follows NICE guidelines on the following:

- Integrated care planning, self-management and support for carers of older people with long-term conditions ([NG22](#)) which highlights the importance of health information provision for patients and carers at every stage of care plan development.
- NICE guidance on individual long-term conditions consistently cites the importance of high-quality health information around treatment and management for patients, carers and families from diagnosis onwards. High quality, defined by NICE, means individually tailored to the patient's level of understanding and designed to be accessible.

For further information about the evidence base, please see the existing Reading Well evidence-base, or download the following documents:

- **Consultation document:**
http://readingagency.org.uk/resources/RWBOP_for_LTC_consultation_paper_Aug16.pdf
- **Book selection framework:**
<http://readingagency.org.uk/resources/Reading%20Well%20LTC%20book%20selection%20framework%20-%20final%20version.pdf>

Is it effective?

In three years, Reading Well has **reached 635,000 people** with book-based help and support.

Around 5,500 prescribers are using the scheme on a regular basis. Prescribers see the main benefits of the programme as increasing the range of support on offer and adding value to existing services. They also **value the role of libraries in promoting health in the community.**

There is also clear evidence of patient benefit:

- 90% of adult users of the common mental health conditions scheme felt they were better **able to understand their conditions**
- 81% of adult users of the common mental health conditions scheme **felt more confident managing their symptoms**
- 71% of users of the dementia scheme agreed it had **increased their understanding of the number and range of sources of support** available
- 74% of users of the dementia scheme who **classified themselves as carers felt that the book helped them to care for someone** with dementia

The full 2015/16 evaluation report can be found at:

<http://reading-well.org.uk/resources/1886>

How is it funded and delivered?

Reading Well for long term conditions is delivered by [The Reading Agency](#) working in partnership with the [Society of Chief Librarians](#), funded by [Arts Council England](#) and the [Wellcome Trust](#).

Locally the scheme is delivered by local library services working with health partners. Around 80% of library authorities are working in partnership with local authority public health partners to deliver Reading Well.

Why are public libraries important for supporting health and wellbeing?

Evidence shows that people see their public library as a safe, trusted and non-stigmatised place to go for health support. Health is one of the five universal offers that public libraries in England offer. See more information about the Public Library Health Offer here: <http://goscl.com/universal-offers/health-offer/>

Libraries offer:

- Health information and signposting services
- Health promotion activity
- National reading programmes promoting learning, literacy and wellbeing, including Reading Well
- Social and recreational opportunities, e.g. reading groups



Commissioning Reading Well for long-term conditions

Commissioners can support delivery in the following ways:

- **Help libraries buy the book collection.** The RRP for each collection of titles is approximately £315
- Purchase **Reading Well Books for long-term conditions** supporting materials from the Reading Agency shop (shop.readingagency.org.uk).
- **Support libraries by distributing materials** to health professionals, throughout CCGs, patient participation groups, GP surgeries, community centres, social care professionals.
- Deliver local advocacy for the scheme

Praise and advocacy for Reading Well

- *“A library is a **welcoming, calm environment** and the positioning of the Reading Well Books on Prescription titles works well”*
- **Helen, Reading Well Books on Prescription for common adult mental health conditions user.** [See full case study here.](#)
- *‘Our analysis of the Reading Well scheme is that it is **reaching the people most likely to benefit**. It fits in with the idea of promoting self-care and independence. Delivering services across a rural geography is possible **when working in partnership** with other organisations such as the library service’*
- **Tracey Polak, Assistant Director, Public Health Devon**
- *"Reading Well has created lists of expert-endorsed titles that are freely available for anyone to borrow from their local library. **It's a real example of integrated care**. I am sure that GPs and other health professionals will value this fantastic scheme that provides patients with **information and support** in such an accessible way”*
- **Dr Paul Blenkiron, NHS Consultant Psychiatrist and Public Engagement Officer at the Royal College of Psychiatrists**

Get in touch

- To find out more about the scheme, or for any further information, please email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk or visit the Reading Well website www.readingwell.org.uk.
- To find out more about health and wellbeing services in your local public library visit the SCL website: <http://goscl.com/>
- To find out more about the wide range of other reading programmes The Reading Agency delivers, visit www.readingagency.org.uk.



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