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HEADSPACE WELCOMES YOUNG READERS

The Reading Agency, the independent charity working to get more reading to more people, is delighted to launch HeadSpace. HeadSpace is the new name and brand for the project known to date as Book Bars – a completely different kind of library provision developed and run in partnership between libraries and young people across England. It will provide environments where young people will choose the furniture and books for their new spaces, can chill out and enjoy cutting-edge reading experiences. (Please see HeadSpace logo attached separately.)

Throughout, young people have been at the heart of this visionary new approach to teenage library services. The original idea came from a group of young people in Derbyshire known as the „Book Pushers“, who wanted a new, „laid-back“ environment in which to read, enjoy books and the written word in all its available forms.

“We really feel that with this project we could get young people back in the libraries and reading!” says Ben Towers, aged 15 years, of the Book Pushers group . ***“This is a great opportunity for young people and by involving young people in the design and running of the project they’ll also learn new skills in marketing, design, planning and running of a business”.***

During the summer of 2006 the Reading Agency worked with almost 700 young people to develop the concept resulting in a Big Lottery award of £575,000. This allowed The Reading Agency to begin work in Spring 2007 in partnership with young people and 20 library services in four English regions. (See „Notes to editors“ for locations list.) Some of the most innovative elements of the project, such as the idea of being served drinks and book of their choice by a specially-trained volunteer „book waiter“ emerged from the young people themselves.

Now the HeadSpace brand has been finalised by young people over a four month consultation partnership with CuriousGroup.

„HeadSpace sums up the whole project,“ says 13 year old Phoebe Hill from Lyme Regis, one of the young people involved in the consultation. ***„It is modern and the project is a modern idea. It’s original and shows that it is for young people“.***

“It’s been great that young people from all over the country were involved in the choosing of HeadSpace and in the development of the project as a whole

through focus groups, training the staff and making key decisions in the development process,” says Lyme Regis-based youth worker Andrew Blake, who works with other young people involved in the consultation.

„HeadSpace is a space for you, your friends and your head,“ sums up 13 year old Lowell Fachau from Dorset, who was also involved in the consultation.

The development of the new brand is just one way in which HeadSpace will encourage active participation of young people. Over the next three years, HeadSpace aims to connect at least 700 young people to accredited volunteering opportunities in libraries, eg: volunteering as “book waiters”.

HeadSpace will be a hub within libraries for young people to feel engaged and welcomed. It is just one of the projects emerging from the Reading Agency’s major change programme for library services for Young people called Fulfilling their Potential. Other projects include the launch in March of a new website where young people aged 13+ will be able to share their reading and writing passions. This new website will allow libraries to deliver reading experiences to young people when, where and however they choose, using web 2.0 technologies – blogs, podcasts, videocasts, RSS feeds, webchats and more. (Please see “Notes to editors” for more information on the new website).

Liz Roberts, HeadSpace project manager for The Reading Agency comments: ***“The HeadSpace project is driven by young people’s ideas and is really showing how libraries are working in partnership with young people to make those ideas happen. The project concept and the HeadSpace brand came directly from young people. They wanted to create a brand that would inspire other young people to get involved and have been leading on the brand development nationally as well as designing fantastic new library environments locally”***.

Miranda McKearney, director of The Reading Agency says: ***“HeadSpace is a brand that sums up what the project is all about – an inclusive, welcoming space for young people that celebrates reading in its widest sense. It’s a brand that acts as an invitation and an inspiration for young people we hope it will become instantly recognizable and associated with providing great library services to young people”***.

**For further information please contact
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Notes to editors:

- The Reading Agency is passionate about reading, and everyone having an equal chance to become a reader. Reading opens doors to knowledge and an inner imaginative life; it connects people to each other. We work to get more of it to more people.
- Founded in 2002, The Reading Agency is an independent charity and reading development agency. We manage national reading programmes and partnerships, linking libraries to broadcasters, the book trade, youth services

and the basic skills sector. For more general information, please visit:
www.readingagency.org.uk

- **HeadSpace sites will be established between April 2007 and March 2010 in the following locations:**
 - **East Midlands:**
 - Buxton Library, Derbyshire
 - Corby Library, Northamptonshire
 - Worksop Library, Nottinghamshire
 - **North West:**
 - Halewood Library, Knowsley
 - Halton Lea Library, Halton
 - Haslingden Library, Lancashire
 - High Street Library, Bolton
 - Longsight Library, Manchester
 - **South East**
 - Burgess Road Library, Southampton
 - Café IT, Folkestone, Kent
 - Crawley Library, West Sussex
 - High Wycombe Library, Buckinghamshire
 - Lordswood Library, Medway**
 - **South West**
 - Barcode Youth Café, North Somerset
 - Central Library, Swindon
 - Efford Library, Plymouth
 - Hartcliffe Library, Bristol
 - Lyme Regis Library, Dorset
 - Melksham Library, Wiltshire
 - Padstow Library, Cornwall
- For more information about The Reading Agency's new website for young people, to launch in March 2008, please contact Ruth Harrison: 020 8297 5058 or ruth.harrison@readingagency.org.uk Or visit: http://www.readingagency.org.uk/projects/children/fullfilling_potential.html
- The Reading Agency engages in research, policy and advocacy, exploring the benefits of reading and libraries. We also develop practical resources to support people working with readers: training, toolkits and promotional materials.
- The Reading Agency runs a major change programme for library services for Young people called Fulfilling their Potential. It provides a basis for planning a long term vision and strategy to redefine libraries' relationship with young people. The programme supports the *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters* policy agendas. The development of the new website and HeadSpace are key innovations being developed as part of the Fulfilling their Potential programme.

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