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## **PUBLISHERS BACK NATIONAL YEAR OF READING TO BRING READERS AND WRITERS TOGETHER**

At last week's Public Library Authorities' Conference (Glasgow: 11-12 October 2007) it was announced that nine of the biggest UK publishers are backing the 2008 National Year of Reading with an array of ambitious activities to connect readers to writers in every English library authority.

The activities will be led by Reading Partners, a group of the UK's leading publishers, working with all the UK's public libraries. Reading Partners is led by The Reading Agency, the independent charity working to get more reading to more people. (Please see Notes to editors below for more information.)

Joanna Prior, Director of Group Marketing and Publicity, Penguin Group, gave a speech about publishers' changing views of the importance of libraries' work with readers, and outlined plans to deliver:

- A huge National Year of Reading author programme in library venues and festivals, with big-name fiction and non fiction writers. This exciting programme involving some of the UK's biggest and best-selling writers will be unveiled later in the year.
- The pairing up of 149 authors with a library in their region, to cover every library authority in England, with each author doing at least one event at their library.
- Experimentation with new models of author events to reach disengaged reading audiences who are not interested in the traditional "reading from the page" event.
- Libraries working closely with publishers to define more books appropriate for adult readers trying to improve their literacy skills

These activities are being planned now for delivery between April-December 2008.

Rachel Alexander, Faber Publicity Director, says: ***"Our library/publisher consortium has spent the last four years experimenting with new ways of working together to reach adult readers. We want to expand the market by helping libraries become vibrant community hubs for reading. We can weave this work into the National Year of Reading which presents us with a whole new set of challenges and opportunities to build on, now and in the future"***.

Miranda McKearney, Director of The Reading Agency says: ***“Not only are these publishers backing the National Year of Reading by bringing their most famous authors to libraries, but they’re committed to reaching every corner of England. We’re excited by this consolidation of a shift in publishers’ working practices - it means that readers will be connecting in new ways with writers, all over England, and we’re thrilled that publishers are also determined to reach emerging readers too.”***

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**Notes to editors:**

- Founded in 2002, The Reading Agency is an independent charity and reading development agency. It aims to get more reading to more people and is passionate about everyone having an equal chance to become a reader.
- Part of the charity’s work involves setting up and running national partnerships, linking libraries to broadcasters, the book trade, youth services and the basic skills sector. Partners include the BBC, major publishers, Orange, the National Youth Agency and the National Literacy Trust.
- One of its key partnership schemes is called Reading Partners. This is a consortium which is setting out to revolutionise the way public libraries and adult publishers work together. It involves nine publishers - Bloomsbury, Faber, Hachette Group, Harper Collins, Harlequin Mills & Boon, Macmillan, Penguin, Random House and Time Warner.
- The Reading Agency also 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.
- For more general information, please visit: [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

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