**Invitation to Tender: Reading Well Books on Prescription Evaluation 2016**

Tenders are invited to undertake a qualitative evaluation of The Reading Well Books on Prescription programme.

**Background**

*Reading Well Books on Prescription* provides book-based support for a variety of health conditions available from English public libraries. Health professionals can refer people to a recommended list of accredited titles to help with specific conditions and people can also use the scheme independently as a first step to understanding and managing symptoms and seeking help. The scheme is *evidence-based* and works within national clinical guidelines.

The scheme was launched in 2013 with a list of accredited self-help reading for common mental health conditions followed by *Reading Well Books on Prescription* for dementia in 2015. It has reached nearly 500,000 people, achieved a significant increase in the loans of core list titles and been used regularly by around 7,000 health professionals. Building on this success, a children and young people’s mental health list will be launched in April 2016.

The scheme is an innovation strand in the Society of Chief Librarians’ Universal Health Offer. It is funded by Arts Council England and the Wellcome Trust and delivered by The Reading Agency working in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians, local library services and health partners.

*The Reading Agency* is a leading independent charity whose pioneering work brings the joy of reading to the widest possible audience across the UK, in partnership with the public library service. The charity’s mission is to create and deliver innovative reading opportunities inspiring more people to read more, encouraging them to share their enjoyment of reading with others and celebrating the difference that reading makes to all our lives. The Reading Agency is funded by Arts Council England.

*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.

Reading Well Books on Prescription has been evaluated using a quantitative methodology in 2013/14 and 2014/15. We are conducting a similar evaluation for 2015/16 using the same evaluation methodology, and this will be carried out by BOP Consulting. We are commissioning this qualitative evaluation of our adult common mental health conditions and dementia schemes to run alongside the quantitative evaluation, to give us a more in-depth understanding of the experience and impact of using the recommended books and...
taking part in the programme. We are also exploring a separate qualitative evaluation of the new Reading Well for young people’s scheme.

**Research methodology**

The proposed methodology for the project is to carry out qualitative, in depth telephone interviews with users of the two Reading Well Books on Prescription schemes (for common mental health conditions and dementia). The aim of the evaluation is to:

- understand the impact of the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme on end users
- understand the user journey, including how people come to borrow a book and what happens following on from them doing so

**Recruitment**

We suggest that research participants could be recruited via a small sample of library authorities (approximately four to six, across England). These libraries would be supported to identify people who are borrowing Reading Well Books on Prescription books who could be contacted about the research. Library staff would require a briefing about the research and a form to gather details about users of the scheme, such as their name, age, gender, book they are borrowing, date they took out the book, phone number and email address. An incentive would need to be provided for research participants and for the library authority, and this should be accounted for in the research budget.

We estimate that each library authority could recruit 15 to 20 individuals over a six week period (they may decide to use multiple sites within one authority). This would result in between 60 and 120 potential participants. We recommend that a total of 30 telephone interviews are then conducted with users of the schemes—split equally between those borrowing books from the common mental health conditions list and the dementia list. We propose that interviews are conducted soon after the participants’ details are passed on to the successful research organisation (up to six weeks after the respondent borrows their book) to capture initial impressions with a second follow up interview conducted six weeks later, to explore impacts.

We welcome comments on the proposed number of interviews and the point at which these should take place.

An alternative recruitment option could be that libraries use existing groups for recruitment: for example support groups or reading groups for people with mental health conditions or with dementia. This would reduce the burden on library staff and result in an easier recruitment process, but might make the evaluation less reflective of the real-world usage of the scheme. We would want to avoid setting up a situation in which people read the books specifically to take part in the research, as this would prevent us from exploring the user journey.

We welcome recommendations on the best recruitment approach from those who bid to carry out this project and we propose that a useful first step for the successful bidder would be to carry out a small number of interviews with library authorities to discuss the proposed approach and finalise a methodology that will work from both a research and a practical point of view.

**Interview content**

Initial discussions have highlighted the following areas to investigate in the interviews:

- How people heard about the book and whether they were aware of it being part of Reading Well Books on Prescription
- Why they borrowed the book
- How they used the book (did they read it, was it helpful, did they read all of it or dip read)
- What happened next – impacts on themselves and others
- Health condition – did they have a condition/did a friend or family member? Has this changed/improved? Do they feel more informed? More confident in managing the condition?
- Attitudes and behaviours related to reading and library – what were they before borrowing the book? And have these changed?
- Ongoing engagement with the scheme: have they borrowed more books from that list? Borrowed related books? Books from another list? Bought books to read? Recommended books to others?
- Awareness of Reading Well Books on Prescription and the delivery partners (The Reading Agency/SCL)
- Whether they have accessed other library or health services follow on from reading the book or have increased awareness of where to get support

Recommendations for additional areas to explore are welcome.

**Outputs:**
The following outputs are required:
- Evaluation report c.30 pages long
- 2 page executive summary
- 4 stand-alone case studies, each focusing on a different individual and highlighting evidence of impact. These will be used on our website or in media stories.
- Findings presentation

**Timetable**

A suggested timeline for the evaluation is as follows:

- 7 April Invitation to Tender issued
- 28 April deadline for submission of tenders
- 10/11 May interviews of shortlisted applicants
- 16 May project starts
- 3 June methodology finalised and library authorities recruited
- 15 July development of research tools completed – including Reading Agency sign off
- 15 July recruitment of possible research participants completed, first round interviews start
- 29 July first round interviews completed
- 29 August second round interviews start
- 9 September second round interviews completed
- 3 October first draft of report produced
- 24 October report finalised
Tender requirements

Budget: The budget available for this research project is £8,000 - £10,000. Tenders should set out a payment schedule related to key milestones.

Costs should be inclusive of VAT and state whether VAT is chargeable. Full cost details of any proposed subcontracts and how these will be managed should be included.

Costs should be itemised under the following headings:

- Salary costs for each project team member to be involved in fulfilling the contract (along with the daily rate and number of days input for each project team member)
- Other administrative costs
- Fieldwork costs
- Travel and subsistence
- Overheads (if applicable)

Staff: The research team should have a high level of expertise and significant experience in conducting similar pieces of work, with relevant or transferable knowledge about the evaluation of reading for health and well-being programmes. Tenders should describe the skills and experience of each individual (attach brief CV) and their expected contribution.

Risks: Tenders should clearly set out the key risk factors for the success of the project and a proposed risk management approach.

Ethics: Tenders should address any anticipated ethical issues and problems and how these will be dealt with.

Data protection and informed consent: Contractors shall comply with all the provisions and obligations under the Data Protection Act (1998), including the eight data protection principles and all subordinate legislation.

Shortlisting procedure

Tenders will be evaluated on best value for money. This will be judged on the basis of:

- How well the tender responds to the brief and the robustness and suitability of the proposal
- Relevant skills and experience of the research team, including track record of producing similar work of a high quality and to deadline
- Level of understanding of the research topic
- The adequacy and quality of proposed project management and risk management arrangements
- Plans for an effective dissemination strategy
- Overall costs

Tenders should therefore provide the following details:

- Details of the proposed methodology
- Relevant information about the organisation
The names and relevant experience, in terms of subject knowledge and skills, of those involved
Staff time commitment to the project (in days)
Timetable
Arrangements for administration and management of the project
Costs

The timetable for the tendering process is as follows:

- Tenders invited: 7 April 2016
- Submission deadline 28 April 2016
- Project commissioned: 16 May 2016

The closing date for receipt of tenders is at 5pm on 28 April. A full electronic copy of the tender including any annexes and supplementary material in MS Word or PDF format should be emailed to rose.vickridge@readingagency.org.uk

Responses to the invitation to tender will be shortlisted and the relevant organisations will be notified and invited to interview at the Reading Agency’s offices week commencing 9 May 2016. Work will commence immediately the contract is awarded.

Any enquiries should be directed to debbie.hicks@readingagency.org.uk or rose.vickridge@readingagency.org.uk