Reading Well Books on Prescription: Library staff handbook

Contents

Section 1: Introduction
- What is the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme?
- Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions
- Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia
- How are the books selected?
- How does the scheme work?
- Who can recommend books?
- Self-referral

Section 2: The need
- National need
- Local need

Section 3: Why libraries?
- The Universal Public Library Health Offer
- Is Reading Well Books on Prescription a universal offer?

Section 4: The evidence base
- Does it work?
- Clinical guidelines
- Common mental health conditions
- Dementia
- Creative and social reading evidence base

Section 5: Partnerships
- Core partners
- National health partners
- Local partners
- The shared model
- Working with public health
- Local commissioning
Section 6: Resources
- Core book list
- User guide
- Prescriber recommendation form
- Guide for professionals
- Posters
- How to get the most out of the recommended reading
- Online professional toolkit
- Reading Well Mood-boosting Books
- Websites

Section 7: Management of Reading Well Books on Prescription
- Central and local co-ordination
- Guidelines for running the scheme
- Community-managed libraries
- Organisations other than public libraries

Section 8: Staff training
- Training
- General guidelines for dealing with vulnerable people

Section 9: Future plans and evaluation
- National resourcing
- Future plans
- Evaluation
- More information
Section 1: Introduction

What is the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme?
Reading Well Books on Prescription is part of the Society of Chief Librarians’ Universal Health Offer. It provides helpful reading for adults experiencing a variety of health conditions. The scheme is endorsed by health professionals and supported by English public libraries.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions
Reading Well Books on Prescription was launched in 2013 as the first national scheme for England with a list of evidence-based self-help books on common mental health conditions. Its core book list of 30 titles provides evidence-based self-help therapy in the following areas:

- Anger
- Chronic pain
- Panic
- Sleep problems
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Phobias
- Social phobia
- Binge eating
- Health anxiety
- Relationship problems
- Stress
- Chronic fatigue
- Obsessions and compulsions
- Self-esteem
- Worry

Find out more about the titles: [www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/common-mental-health-conditions](http://www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/common-mental-health-conditions)

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia
Available in English public libraries from February 2015, Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia recommends helpful reading to improve people’s understanding and awareness of dementia in its various forms. The core book list includes professionally endorsed information and advice for people diagnosed with dementia and their carers, as well as support with how to live well with the condition.

Find out more about the titles: [www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/dementia](http://www.reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/dementia)

How are the books selected?
The books for both lists were selected using an evidence-based approach supported by a rigorous process of consultation and expert advice. The titles have all been recommended by experts as useful, effective and accessible and tried and tested by people with lived experience. For more information about the book selection protocol, see [readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPBookSelectionProtocol201415.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPBookSelectionProtocol201415.pdf)

How does the scheme work?
Reading Well Books on Prescription aims to increase access to quality-assured health information and advice. The scheme adds value to existing care and service provision.

- Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions is an early intervention treatment at step one in the Stepped Care Model for mental health and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) provision. Health professionals can recommend books to people they might not yet refer to IAPT services, to use while waiting for, or as part of, treatment. The scheme can be used as a standalone treatment, alongside or following medication and psychological treatment, and as part of a therapeutic programme.
- Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia has been developed for people with dementia and their carers. It is also helpful in raising public awareness of the causes and symptoms of the condition and contributing to the creation of dementia-friendly communities. Books can be used before, during and after diagnosis and to support family and carers.

Who can recommend books?
Health and social care professionals can recommend books.

For common mental health conditions, the scheme is likely to be used by GPs, IAPT professionals including psychological wellbeing practitioners, mental health nurses, counsellors, therapists, psychiatrists and psychologists.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia is likely to be used by a range of health and social care professionals who provide dementia care, including GPs, IAPT professionals, memory clinic professionals, counsellors, therapists, community nurses such as Admiral Nurses and people working in care homes.

Self-referral
The core list books for both schemes should be available on the open shelves in libraries for anyone to borrow. Evaluation of the first year of the scheme shows that self-referral is a key feature of how the scheme is used. Many people borrow books without a prescription, as a first step to understanding their condition and its symptoms. The value of an expert-endorsed collection means that the scheme is safe to use in this way especially when supported by the availability of user leaflets which include information about where to go for further help. User leaflets are available for both schemes.

Section 2: The need

National need
There is an enormous need for quality-assured and community-based help relating to both mental health and dementia. For more information about the national need, see readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_for_dementia_evidence_base.pdf

Local need
Local area health targets are set by newly formed local authority health and wellbeing boards, working with public health departments and clinical commissioning groups. These targets will be informed by the findings of the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA analyses the health needs of populations to guide the strategic commissioning of health, wellbeing and social care services within local authority areas. It also underpins local health and wellbeing strategies and strategic commissioning plans. It is important to consult your local JSNA in order to understand the health and wellbeing needs of your local community and how the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme can help to meet them.

Section 3: Why libraries?

The Universal Public Library Health Offer
Reading Well Books on Prescription is part of the Society of Chief Librarians’ Universal Health Offer – one of four universal offers SCL is delivering with the support of Arts Council England. The other three offers are Digital, Reading and Information. The aim of each offer is to deliver a core package of partnerships,
resources and advocacy messages at a national level, which can be delivered locally and shaped to meet differing local needs.

Research shows that people see libraries as safe, trusted and non-stigmatised places to go for help with, and information about, health problems.¹ The Universal Public Library Health Offer demonstrates the important role that libraries play in supporting the health of local communities. They provide:

- A network of local community hubs
- Community outreach supporting vulnerable people
- Staff with local knowledge and expertise in information management and community engagement
- Assisted online access to health resources.

Libraries enable local communities to help themselves through:

- Health and care information services
- Referral and signposting
- Health promotion activity
- National reading programmes promoting learning, literacy and health and wellbeing
- Social and recreational opportunities such as reading groups
- Volunteering and community engagement opportunities.

The Dementia Offer is part of the Public Library Health Offer. It articulates the key role libraries play in supporting people whose lives are affected by dementia and in building dementia-friendly communities.

Reading Well Books on Prescription helps people discover the other relevant health and wellbeing reading services available in libraries by highlighting them in both the user and prescriber leaflets.

For more information about the Universal Public Library Health Offer see http://www.goscl.com/universal-offers/about-universal-offers/ For more information about the dementia aspect of this offer see readingagency.org.uk/adults/PublicLibraryDementiaOffer.pdf

Is Reading Well Books on Prescription a universal offer?

Reading Well Books on Prescription is available in 96% of English library authorities. The common mental health conditions list is available in 92% of authorities and the dementia scheme in 87%. At a time of cuts and library closures, the scheme demonstrates how public libraries can deliver on key policy areas such as dementia and mental health – improving the health and wellbeing of local communities. It helps to raise the profile of libraries, levers in new resources and supports local authorities in delivering a consistent and quality-assured level of service as cost effectively as possible.

Section 4: The evidence base

Does it work?
The evaluation of the first year of Reading Well Books on Prescription shows that the scheme is effective both in terms of reach and impact. Evidence is building to show that the scheme works as community health service intervention.

In its first year, the scheme for common mental health conditions:

- Reached 275,000 people
- Achieved a 113% increase in library loans of core list books
- Delivered significant user benefits, with 91% of service users saying they had found it helpful, and two thirds that it helped them to understand and manage their condition
- Has been used regularly by around 7,000 health professionals.

For the full findings of the evaluation of the scheme’s first year, see readingagency.org.uk/adults/impact/research/reading-well-books-on-prescription.html

Clinical guidelines

Common mental health conditions
The scheme delivers evidence-based practice and works within clinical guidelines. Guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommend CBT-based self-help approaches as a first step in the treatment of common mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, phobias, chronic fatigue and some eating disorders. Evidence is growing that self-help books based on the principles of CBT can be effective. For a review of the evidence base see readingagency.org.uk/readingwell/evidencebase

Dementia
Improving dementia services and quality of care is a key priority of the Department of Health’s National Dementia Strategy and the Prime Minister’s Dementia Challenge. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE CG 42) recommends that dementia care should:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of dementia
- Offer practical advice about services
- Provide support following diagnosis and with early memory loss
- Support carers practically, emotionally and mentally
- Encourage people to remain independent and active
- Enhance quality of care.

The books on the Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia scheme have been recommended by experts and people with experience of dementia as providing quality assured support in these areas. For further information about the evidence base, see readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_for_dementia_evidence_base.pdf
Creative and social reading evidence base
While there is less clinical data for the wellbeing benefits of creative and social reading compared to self-help reading, evidence shows that reading novels and poetry can reduce stress, and that social reading activity such as reading groups can promote wellbeing, combat isolation and bring people together in supportive communities. See readingagency.org.uk/readingwell/evidencebase

Section 5: Partnerships

Core partners
Reading Well Books on Prescription is delivered by The Reading Agency working in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians, local library services and national and local health partners. It is funded by Arts Council England.

National health partners
The following health partners support the scheme:
- British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
- British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
- The British Psychological Society
- Mind
- National Association of Primary Care
- NHS England (IAPT)
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Royal College of Nursing
- Royal College of Psychiatrists.

In addition, the dementia scheme is supported by:
- Alzheimer’s Society
- Carers UK
- Dementia UK
- Innovations in Dementia.

Local partners
Local partnerships include local authority public health departments, IAPT services, health libraries, hospitals, prisons, pharmacies and charities supporting older people, carers and people with experience of mental ill health.

The shared model
A shared national model is a cost-effective way of working. Reading Well Books on Prescription saves costs for both libraries and commissioners. It delivers a low-cost community service, providing health and wellbeing benefits to local people. The national cost average of the scheme is around £1 a person. It also raises the profile of public libraries’ contribution to the health agenda and has brokered some important new national and local library partnerships.
Reading Well Books on Prescription:
- Delivers economies of scale, resulting in high-quality resources at lower cost
- Centralises administration and management, releasing capacity at the frontline and reducing local overheads
- Helps build the national evidence base.

Working with public health
You will find it helpful to contact public health colleagues to discuss partnership opportunities linked to the local delivery of Reading Well Books on Prescription. They can help identify relevant prescribers, distribute materials to health professionals and advise on funding and commissioning opportunities. The best way to start is by contacting your local director of public health.

Local commissioning
Active commissioning partnerships with library services are being developed. Around a third of library services have now been commissioned by local authority public health partners to deliver Reading Well Books on Prescription. Interest is also developing among clinical commissioning groups. Commissioning guides for both schemes can be found at:
- Common mental health conditions: readingagency.org.uk/adults/Reading%20Well%20Commissioning%20Guidelines%20final.docx
- Dementia: readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPfordementiacommissioningtguide.pdf

Section 6: Resources

Core book lists
The core book lists of 30 expert endorsed self-help titles for common mental health conditions and 25 dementia-related titles are central Reading Well Books on Prescription resources. For details of the book lists see:
- Common mental health conditions: readingagency.org.uk/resources/Reading%20Well%20BoP%20Core%20Book%20Overview.pdf
- Dementia: readingagency.org.uk/adults/ReadingWellCoreDementiaBooksOverview.pdf

The Reading Well Books on Prescription core reading list is only available for use as part of the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme and when supported by its printed resources. Permission to use the core list by organisations not subscribing to this scheme should be sought from The Reading Agency.

In order to make Reading Well Books on Prescription as accessible as possible, material is available in other formats including e-books and audio. Further information for format availability for both schemes can be found on a format spreadsheet; see:
- Common mental health conditions: readingagency.org.uk/resources/Reading%20Well%20Books%20On%20 Prescription%20Detailed%20Core%20Book%20List%20-%20April%202013.xlsx
- Dementia: readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPfordementiaformats.xlsx

Reviews of books featured on the core book lists are available on the Reading Well website: www.readingwell.org.uk/books
**User guide**
The Reading Well Books on Prescriptions user guides are available in hard copy and digital formats; see:

- [readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_user_leaflet.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_user_leaflet.pdf) (available to order from The Reading Agency shop: shop.readingagency.org.uk)
- [readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_digital_user_leaflet.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_digital_user_leaflet.pdf) (digital)

They are essential to the delivery of the scheme – both because evaluation shows that a large proportion of people self-refer via the user guides, and because the guides also include essential signposting to further help and guidance. Library authorities are encouraged to accept the recommendation form (included in the guides), when signed by the user and prescriber, as sufficient evidence of identity to join the library.

**Prescriber recommendation form**
An online version of this is available at: [readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_recommended_reading_form.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_recommended_reading_form.pdf)

We are exploring how to make these available to GPs through local GP intranet systems.

**Guide for professionals**
The Reading Well Books on Prescription guide for professionals is available in hard copy and digital formats; see [readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_prescriber_leaflet.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP_dementia_prescriber_leaflet.pdf). Hard copy versions can be purchased from The Reading Agency shop: shop.readingagency.org.uk

The guide should be distributed by library authorities to prescribers to support the delivery of the scheme.

**Posters**
A3 and A4 posters are available. See [shop.readingagency.org.uk](http://shop.readingagency.org.uk)

**How to get the most out of the recommended reading**
Respected professionals with relevant experience have produced guides to help people get the most out of the reading recommended by Reading Well Books on Prescription. See:

- Common mental health conditions: [readingagency.org.uk/adults/Reading%20Well%20Making%20the%20most%20of%20your%20book.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/Reading%20Well%20Making%20the%20most%20of%20your%20book.pdf)
- Dementia: [readingagency.org.uk/adults/Making_the_most_of_your_book.pdf](http://readingagency.org.uk/adults/Making_the_most_of_your_book.pdf)

**Online health professional’s toolkit**
An online prescriber toolkit is available to help health professionals run the scheme. This includes the prescriber handbook, the core list overview document, digital versions of the leaflets and an online recommendation form. See [www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/739](http://www.reading-well.org.uk/resources/739)

**Reading Well Mood-boosting Books**
New lists of Mood-boosting books will be regularly available to support Reading Well Books on Prescription. See [www.reading-well.org.uk/books/mood-boosting-books](http://www.reading-well.org.uk/books/mood-boosting-books)
### Websites

The Reading Well website can be found at [www.reading-well.org.uk](http://www.reading-well.org.uk) This includes helpful information about the Books on Prescription and Mood-boosting Books titles, as well as providing users the chance to rate and review them. It also includes a blog and supporting resources for the public, health professionals and libraries.

For more information about reading groups, see [www.readinggroups.org](http://www.readinggroups.org). This is part of Reading Groups for Everyone, a campaign run by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians. The site provides resources to help people find and join a reading group. It includes a database of local groups, including those targeted specifically at people with mental health conditions and dementia.

The Reader Organisation website also gives useful information about their work with libraries to support a network of groups that read aloud. These groups provide support for people with common mental health conditions and dementia. See [www.thereader.org.uk](http://www.thereader.org.uk).

### Section 7: Management of Reading Well Books on Prescription

#### Central and local co-ordination

Working in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians and with the Public Library Health Group, The Reading Agency manages the national delivery of Reading Well Books on Prescription, acting as the central point of contact for national co-ordination and administration, advocacy, national partnerships and development. This is similar to its role in the Summer Reading Challenge.

The Public Library Health Group consists of senior library representatives from each of the English regions. The members of the group represent the views of local SCL and regional library authorities on the development and delivery of the scheme. Members of the group include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South West Region</td>
<td>Martin Burton</td>
<td>South Gloucestershire Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:martin.burton@southglos.gov.uk">martin.burton@southglos.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Region</td>
<td>Tricia Fincher</td>
<td>Kent Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tricia.fincher@kent.gov.uk">tricia.fincher@kent.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Ted Rogers</td>
<td>Hackney Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Edward.Rogers@Hackney.gov.uk">Edward.Rogers@Hackney.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>Daniel Waller</td>
<td>Hillingdon Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dwaller@hillingdon.gov.uk">dwaller@hillingdon.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands Region</td>
<td>Tracy Cox</td>
<td>Solihull Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tcox@solihull.gov.uk">tcox@solihull.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands Region</td>
<td>Nigel Thomas</td>
<td>Leicestershire Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nigel.thomas@leics.gov.uk">nigel.thomas@leics.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Region</td>
<td>James Nicol</td>
<td>Cambridgeshire Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:james.nicol@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">james.nicol@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire and Humber Region</td>
<td>Andy Wright</td>
<td>Wakefield Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:awright@wakefield.gov.uk">awright@wakefield.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West Region</td>
<td>Andrea Ellison</td>
<td>Oldham Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Andrea.Ellison@oldham.gov.uk">Andrea.Ellison@oldham.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East Region</td>
<td>Fiona Hill</td>
<td>Newcastle Libraries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fiona.hill@newcastle.gov.uk">fiona.hill@newcastle.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Public library authorities are the local co-ordinating agencies for the scheme. They manage local partnership development, advocacy, commissioning and fundraising. Public libraries also manage book stock and the distribution of print resources, and act as the contact point for enquiries from local GPs and other health professionals who wish to become involved as prescribers.

**Guidelines for running the scheme**

The following delivery guidelines have been agreed by the Public Library Health Group as core requirements for delivery of the scheme by library services.

→ **Designated responsibility**

There should be an identified member of staff in each authority with responsibility for managing the local delivery of Reading Well Books on Prescription. Please keep The Reading Agency and your regional Public Library Health Group representative informed of any contact detail changes to ensure receipt of regular information updates and involvement in consultation.

→ **Book collections**

Full collections of Reading Well Books on Prescription titles should be available in every library in an authority. Some authorities have purchased collections for all library service points, including mobiles and prison libraries. This level of provision may not be possible for all authorities, but core list titles should be available through every library supported by the inter-library loan system.

Books must be available on open shelves for anyone to borrow.

Additional titles cannot be displayed as part of Reading Well collections if they are not part of the core booklists. This is to retain the integrity of the accredited list. Local collections and resources can be used to complement the scheme, but should not be displayed or branded as part of it.

→ **Print materials**

Leaflets should be provided in sufficient quantities to ensure the effective delivery of the scheme and to support and inform the public and professionals. We can provide guidelines to help you estimate how much print material you may need, although we recognise that budget constraints are a real issue in this respect. We suggest the following core items be prioritised:

- The Reading Well Books on Prescription user guide. This ensures people are fully informed about how the scheme works and where to go for further support. These guides should be made available through libraries and partner agencies and prescribers.
- The Reading Well Books on Prescription guide for professionals. This ensures that health professionals know how to use the scheme and how to recommend books. These should be circulated to a relevant network of health professionals able to recommend books.
- Posters. These can be helpful in raising awareness with the public and partners.

Resources cannot be amended, adapted or created without consent.

→ **Prescriber partnerships**

It is important to identify a network of appropriate health professionals able to recommend titles and to support people in understanding and managing their conditions. It may be a good idea to start with a small network of enthusiastic partners. Public health colleagues can help you build this network.
Concessions
Most authorities are able to offer free reservations for Reading Well Books on Prescription titles plus easy library joining for people with recommendation forms signed by a health professional. These are important baseline concessions that all authorities should aim to deliver where possible. Extended loan periods and no overdue charges are also key targets for the scheme.

Reading Well Mood-boosting Books
Reading Well Mood-boosting Books is an important strand of the Reading Well scheme and is signposted in both the user guide and guide for health professionals. Where possible, Mood-boosting Book collections should be available in libraries, and staff should be briefed on the links between Reading Well Mood-boosting Books and Reading Well Books on Prescription.

Reading groups
Similarly, it is important to update local reading group data on the national reading group database at www.readinggroups.org.uk, and to inform library staff that the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme also recommends local reading group activity. There is evidence to show that social reading activity can help promote wellbeing. Reading groups are a source of enjoyment and can make people feel included and part of a supportive social network. They can help people explore life experiences through fictional characters and stories. You may also offer specialised reading groups for people with mental health conditions within your authority, including read-aloud reading groups based on the Get Into Reading model.

Branding
Branding guidelines are available to support the marketing of and communications about the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme; see readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOP%20for%20dementia%20branding%20guidelines.pdf. These guidelines have been designed for use by libraries, publishers and partners. They include key messages, visual guidelines and information about the use of the logos of Reading Well Books on Prescription and its partners. Branding guidelines should be followed when promoting the scheme.

Ordering materials
Materials can be ordered at designated times of the year to keep costs to a minimum. Information about ordering processes will be available via our regular newsletter and at our shop; see shop.readingagency.org.uk. Library authorities should also discuss local needs with local authorities’ Public Health Department. For more information about ordering materials, please contact readingwell@readingagency.org.uk. Commissioning guides are available for both schemes to help you with these discussions:

- Common mental health conditions: readingagency.org.uk/adults/Reading%20well%20commissioning%20guidelines%20final.docx
- Dementia: readingagency.org.uk/adults/RWBOPfordementiacommissioningguide.pdf
Distribution of materials
Materials will be delivered to agreed central library contact points. Library authorities will be responsible for local distribution to health partners. Public Health colleagues may be able to help or even manage this distribution for libraries. While some material will be available in libraries, the intention is that much of it will be distributed by libraries to local health partners including GPs, community mental health nurses and local IAPT providers.

You can download a template letter to help you approach relevant health professionals with information about the scheme; see readingagency.org.uk/resources/GP%20letter.docx

Community-managed libraries
Community-managed libraries can deliver the scheme if they are able to do so within the guidelines outlined. They should contact their local authority’s library service to confirm any arrangements for joint working.

Organisations other than public libraries
Organisations other than public libraries can take part in the scheme as long as they meet the delivery guidelines outlined above. Such organisations include health organisations, prisons, third sector agencies, HE and FE colleges. Independent organisations should contact the local library service to explore partnership opportunities.

Section 8: Staff training

Training options
The Reading Agency is developing an online module to support library staff training linked to Reading Well Books on Prescription. This will be available in 2015. You may also wish to consider the following:

- Mental health awareness training is often locally available. Public health colleagues should be able to advise on local providers.
- For more information about Dementia Friends training and the Dementia Friends pack, see www.dementiafriends.org.uk. The Social Care Institute for Excellence Dementia Gateway also provides useful resources; see www.scie.org.uk/publications/dementia/index.asp.
- The Social Care Institute for Excellence has produced a Dementia e-learning programme with The Alzheimer’s Society. See www.scie.org.uk/assets/elearning/dementia/dementia01/resource/flash/index.html.
- For information on adapting libraries to dementia friendly environment standards see www.dementiaaction.org.uk/assets/0000/4334/dementia_friendly_environments_checklist.pdf

General guidelines for dealing with vulnerable people
Library authorities are likely to have their own guidelines for dealing with vulnerable people. The following points may also be useful to consider:

- Public library staff are usually expert at dealing with the general public. Nevertheless it is important to make sure that all frontline staff are aware that people using the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme may require extra sensitivity, discretion and support.
- People using the scheme may find it difficult to approach staff for help, and they may also be lacking in concentration and confidence. It is important that they are supported as much as possible, that systems are clear and that confidentiality is guaranteed.
- If a book is not immediately available, a copy should be reserved and the customer informed of the expected date of availability. Reservations should be free of charge if possible.
- If the customer is not a library member, joining should be made simple. A form signed by a health professional and with the name and address of a customer should be sufficient ID to join.
- Library procedures should be explained and the loan period and renewal systems made clear.
- Some people may not wish to draw attention to the fact that they are borrowing a self-help book and may prefer to borrow the book without handing in the recommendation form.
- Staff should be made aware that they should not give an alternative book to someone who has had a specific title recommended by a health professional, but should instead reserve that title.

People borrowing Reading Well books may also be interested in other health and wellbeing services available in the library, such as information about local services relevant to their condition, Reading Well Mood-boosting Books and library based social and recreational activity such as reading groups. It will be helpful to draw attention to these services if at all possible.

Section 9: Future plans and evaluation

National resourcing
National fundraising is underway to support a three-year development plan for the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme. Income from the sale of resources is being invested to cover central Reading Agency staffing and development costs.

Future plans
Working with ASCEL, we are planning a scheme to support the mental health of children and young people in 2016, and will also be revising the common mental health conditions core booklist. We then hope to focus on long-term conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

Evaluation
Evaluation of the scheme will usually take place in the spring of each year, with reporting in the summer. Evaluation will consist of:

- Analysis of annual book issues and publisher sales figures
- Library survey
- Prescriber survey
- User survey.

More information
For any more information about the scheme, please contact readingwell@readingagency.org.uk or Debbie Hicks at debbie.hicks@readingagency.org.uk.