

the reading agency

Helping libraries deliver on local authority agendas

The Reading Agency's programmes support popular Local Area Agreement targets including:

- É health
- É young people
- É community
- É children's achievement

We also support Public Service Agreement target groups:

- children and young people
- communities
- older people
- learners

Our projects and programmes support National Year of Reading target audiences:

- É BME children and communities (particularly from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Eastern European backgrounds)
- É KS3 boys, and white working class boys
- É disabled children and parents (especially those with visual impairment; dyslexic children)
- É looked after children
- É parents and carers of children, working class fathers and young dads
- É adult learners/ Skills for Life adults

How our programmes help

Children's reading achievement

The Summer Reading Challenge™ involves around 660,000 children each year, 38,000 of which join the library to take part. Research shows:

- Children taking part in the challenge read more books.
- They feel that it makes them better readers.
- It improves the confidence of weaker readers.
- It widens children's reading and knowledge of books and authors

School Literacy Coordinators report positive differences between children who do the SRC and those who don't. They recognise the benefits that this has on children's reading skills and levels of enthusiasm.

"[The SRC is] an excellent way of sustaining reading levels whilst not in school." ... "You can see [non-participants'] skills have regressed and they are not motivated in the same way." Participants return to school "more mature" ... "have a more enthusiastic attitude" and are "more ready to learn". (Literacy coordinators)

Family reading: The Vital Link with Parents and **The Big Book Share** for offenders in prison help libraries to engage with families and encourage more shared reading right from the start.

Study support: we help libraries support children's skills and development through **Chatterbooks** reading groups, and creative reading activities run by libraries in partnership with schools (see the library offer for schools at www.enjoyingreading.org.uk).

Children's Reading Partners, our publisher partnership, is opening up new opportunities for libraries' work with children (see the events database at www.readingagency.org.uk).

Young people: Positive activities, community engagement and volunteering

We have been closely involved in developing the library **Youth Offer** with MLA and other partners. The offer shows how libraries support positive outcomes for young people. (Find it at <http://digbig.com/4wfbby>)

Reading and libraries are key components of the **Find Your talent** pathfinder projects. Reading, which we support through our programmes and projects, underpins all cultural activity.

We're leading programmes such as **Fulfilling their Potential** and **HeadSpace** which offer new ways of involving young people and for accrediting their involvement. Publisher partnerships, and our new young people's website **Groupthing**, extend the range of positive activities libraries can offer (more details from info@grouphing.org).

The Summer Reading Challenge supports young people at the transition from Year 6 to year 7 through specially designed resources for schools, children and libraries.

Our new **Participate** programme is bringing together recent learning from several programmes to offer a training and change package to help more libraries to engage young people effectively and successfully. (More details from Claire.styles@readingagency.org.uk)

TRF (www.theirreadingfutures.org.uk) provides underpinning training and support for libraries' work with children, young people and families.

Community engagement, cohesion and wellbeing , including older people

Our work with **Library Reading Groups** provides opportunities for readers to meet together and engage. Many library reading groups are targeted to meet specific needs, e.g. helping adult learners develop reading confidence and skills.

Reading events (such as those run through **Reading Partners**, our adult Library/publisher partnership scheme) enable people in the community to meet and debate important issues with published writers and each other.

We're involved in **bibliotherapy** research and development, supporting health and well being, and linking programmes including Books on Prescription, creative bibliotherapy activity, and reading group work.

Our range of reader-centred programmes offer a variety of roles for **volunteers**.

Adult learning

We support libraries to work in partnership with Skills for Life providers, helping learners develop reading for pleasure. Our annual **Six Book Challenge**, offered in association with Costa, develops the confidence and skills that come from a regular reading habit. You can sign up now for the 2009 materials via www.readingagency.org.uk

"I never thought I could read one book, never mind six! I feel so proud. I've never felt so good about myself. I feel like I can do anything now." Challenge completer, Warrington