

Reading Well Books on Prescription Background information

Reading Well Books on Prescription provides accredited reading and book-based support for a variety of health conditions available from public libraries. It is delivered by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians with funding from Arts Council England. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered by public libraries as part of the Society of Chief Librarians' Universal Health Offer, a positive vision for public libraries' contribution to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for common mental health conditions was launched in June 2013 as the first national scheme for England. It is a universal library offer available in 95% of public library authorities. Building on this success, Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia will be available in public libraries from **February 2015**.

The need

Dementia presents a huge challenge to society, both now and increasingly in the future. An estimated 3,420 people in North Somerset have dementia. Dementia costs the UK economy £17 billion a year and, in the next 30 years, the number of people with dementia in the UK will double to 1.4 million, with the costs trebling to over £50 billion a year.

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia

Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia has been developed to support people with dementia and their carers. It is also helpful in raising public awareness of the causes and symptoms of the condition and helping to create dementia-friendly communities. It provides:

- Information and advice about dementia and normal ageing
- Support following diagnosis
- Practical help for carers
- Personal accounts of people with dementia and their relatives and carers
- Suggested therapeutic activities.

How it works

Health professionals offering dementia care can use the scheme to recommend helpful reading. Books can be used before, during and post diagnosis and to support family and carers. The scheme can also be used on a self-referral basis. The books are available on the open shelves for anyone to borrow from public libraries. The books on the Reading Well Books on Prescription for dementia list have been recommended by health experts and experts by experience as providing quality assured support in these areas.

The 25 recommended books will be available in all libraries in North Somerset in February. Books can be borrowed for up to six weeks instead of the normal three week loan period. There is a free reservation facility of titles as well as easy library joining for people with a recommendation reading form signed by a prescriber. Public and prescriber leaflets are available in North Somerset

by contacting Elaine Mellor, elaine.mellor@n-somerset.gov.uk. Books can be borrowed or reserved at any local library or reserved on the LibrariesWest catalogue www.librarieswest.org.uk

Why are public libraries important to building dementia friendly communities?

Evidence shows that people see their library as a safe, trusted and non-stigmatised place to go for health information. As well as Reading Well Books on Prescription, libraries may offer:

- Information about local dementia services
- Social and recreational activities such as reading groups
- Reminiscence collections
- Reading Well Mood-boosting Books.

National partnerships

The scheme is supported by Alzheimer's Society, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, The British Psychological Society, Carers UK, Dementia UK, Innovations in Dementia, National Association of Primary Care, NHS England (IAPT), Royal College of General Practitioners, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Further information and contacts

Reading Well Books on Prescription website www.reading-well.org.uk

North Somerset Council Library Service www.n-somerset.gov.uk/libraries **Library catalogue at** www.librarieswest.org.uk Contact Elaine Mellor elaine.mellor@n-somerset.gov.uk

The Reading Agency is an independent charity with a mission to get more people reading more because everything changes when we read. It delivers national reading programmes with public libraries and is funded by the Arts Council. Contact Debbie Hicks debbie.hicks@readingagency.org.uk, website www.readingagency.org.uk

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. Contact Martin Burton martin.burton@southglos.gov.uk, website www.goscl.com

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2010 and 2015, it will invest £1.9 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1.1 billion from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. Website www.artscouncil.org.uk