



LOSING OUR LIBRARIES

How special interest groups
and private businesses collect
taxpayers' money in plain sight

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FOREWORD

BY HEATHER BINNING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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To read that our public libraries are not in a good place did not come as a surprise, but the nature of the problems they are facing certainly did. This report raises important questions about how public money is allocated and who has oversight of the projects that are funded.

Many of us have a fondness for these most trusted institutions. To find that they have been used as vehicles for promoting a dangerous and anti-scientific ideology to children, and that they offer health interventions without any follow-up or criteria for understanding the efficacy or otherwise is quite shocking.

Those who should have had oversight of funding decisions have been asleep at the wheel, and their lack of rigorous controls has let us all down. Self-reported successes are not backed up by data that show only falling rates of literacy and ever decreasing library footfall.

Every penny counts. It cannot be right that projects that have low public engagement and a clear commercial conflict of influence are funded from the public purse with so few questions asked, particularly when we have such poor literacy rates needing urgent attention.

Libraries must use their resources to address this most pressing of issues rather than allowing themselves to be sidetracked by the latest fads.

Libraries are not community centres. They are places where people should be able to access trusted sources of information, to study and to find the very best literature. Right now, they are failing to deliver.

Executive Summary

- Public libraries have faced an existential threat due to the technological shift from paper-based to digital systems of literature and information exchange, and a serious decline in literacy amongst both adults and young people, both of which phenomena have led to a decline in library footfall;
- As a consequence, actions in the last decade and particularly in the last five years by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have converted libraries into ‘community hubs’, with a diversified set of functions beyond their core purpose of promoting literacy and access to literature;
- Funding for libraries by the DCMS goes through a complex and opaque system, mixing straightforward money to Local Councils and grants awarded by The Arts Council England (ACE), which was made national development agency for libraries and given responsibility for administering much of DCMS library funding;
- Freedom of Information requests reveal that 80% of ACE funding goes to private companies, the vast majority of which (including 8 of the 10 awarded >£300,000 a year) are charities;
- Projects funded by the ACE lack detail about services delivered or a metric of positive outcomes by which success might be evaluated, beyond numbers of involved participants (including the mere fact of ‘footfall’). This leads to library mission-creep beyond their core purpose and is part of an overall lack of proper strategic direction;
- In this context, libraries have become vulnerable to contested and even harmful ideologies and social trends, including gender identity ideology (GII) which lacks a factual or scientific basis, despite expectations of ideological neutrality on the part of libraries;
- GII and wider ‘social justice’ ideology has become demonstrably prevalent in the librarians’ professional body, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the guidance from which on *Managing safe and inclusive public library services* explicitly calls into question library neutrality, a violation of their ethical commitments to impartiality and the avoidance of ‘inappropriate bias’;
- Such ideological infiltration, especially as regards LGBTQ+ concerns, can also be seen throughout the system of institutions governing libraries, including the ACE and even the current Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport;
- This state of affairs is contrary to and undermines the high level of trust which the public puts in libraries to concentrate on promoting literacy according to objective measurements and standard principles of good governance and ideological neutrality;
- A case study for how such trust can be exploited is that of The Reading Agency and its ACE-supported *Reading Well* scheme, of which there is evidence that it lacks appropriate controls to prevent conflicts of interest and the promotion of contested ideologies, and lacks objective measurement of outcomes. *Reading Well* variously:
 - Promotes self-help texts for mental health and wellbeing despite not being based on probative evidence of medical benefit, including books on ‘mindfulness’ an arguably pseudoscientific set of practices of which there is some evidence of significant and lasting adverse effects;
 - Undermines child safeguarding by promoting texts to children in its *Reading Well for Teens* list that both advocate GII and signpost to LGBTQ+ activist organisations for which there are serious safeguarding concerns;
 - Is a lucrative scheme on the book lists of which a high proportion of the titles come from publishing houses at which The Reading Agency Trustees hold directorships, and through which publishers are able to promote their books to librarians and reading groups without consideration of the pure merit of these texts.
- This paper recommends a redress of the above by a renewed focus for libraries on improving literacy as their proper mission and a renewed commitment to ideological neutrality, and greater scrutiny of both ACE grants according to proper process and objective success metrics, and also the wider charitable sector as to whether organisations given charitable status are really fulfilling their formal objectives.

1 – Modern libraries – experiencing an identity crisis

The Digital Age: An Existential Threat

Since ancient times libraries have represented the pinnacle of human learning; a potent symbol of current achievements and a powerful mechanism for passing wisdom from one generation to the next. In public ownership and with trained professionals organising and collating the information stored in our libraries, they can act as a trusted bulwark against propaganda and vested interests.

Books represent not just information, but wisdom and ideas. They offer a window into other lives and belief systems, and this is why the burning of books provokes outrage. Even today, more than 2,000 years later, the burning of the great library of Alexandria is still lamented by scholars and ordinary people alike.



Fig. 1 – The Burning of the Library of Alexandria (Anon).

Books and libraries are so deeply embedded in western culture that the notion that they might become surplus to requirements or worse, irrelevant, seems incomprehensible. But the wholesale shift from the physical page delivering information, knowledge and entertainment to the digital sphere of self-published material, instant entertainment and connectivity to family, friends, work and government from the computer-in-your-pocket is promising to do exactly that.

The speed of change has been breathtaking. In less than twenty-five years we have moved from paper-based, physical systems of governance, information and literature to digital interactions. As a result, libraries, which are rooted very much in the physical, bricks-and-mortar world face an existential threat.

2015–2021: From Libraries Taskforce to Arts Council England

By 2015 it was clear that action was needed, so the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) set up the Libraries Taskforce to set the strategic direction for the public library service. Published by the Libraries Taskforce, *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016–2021*¹ attempted to articulate the purpose of libraries in the 21st century.

The report identified the core function of libraries as delivering:

- Cultural and creative enrichment;
- Increased reading and literacy;
- Improved digital access and literacy;
- Helping everyone achieve their full potential.

1 *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016–2021*, Libraries Taskforce (2016), see especially section '5. The outcomes libraries deliver for their communities' in the 2018 edition.

Beyond this, *Libraries Deliver* expects libraries to act as ‘community hubs’ that should also promote:

- Healthier and happier lives;
- Greater prosperity;
- Stronger, more resilient communities.



Fig. 2 – From *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016–2021*.

Whilst all these outcomes could – in principle – be delivered virtually, positioning libraries as community hubs retained the need for a physical presence in towns and cities and reinforced a drive by DCMS to convert libraries into wellness centres; ‘healthy libraries’ working with Public Health staff and local doctors’ surgeries. In some libraries, library staff have been trained to deliver health interventions ² and there was an ambition that ‘quality-assured health literary resources and information’ ³ should be made available in the library.

As libraries transformed themselves into community hubs, they were expected to provide an increasingly diverse range of activities from cookery advice to carers groups, from dance events to jobs fairs. ⁴ Whilst these are all worthwhile activities, their delivery is not a core strength of libraries or librarians, not least because they go significantly beyond addressing literacy and information needs. It is therefore highly questionable as to whether this diversification of library functions is appropriate or rather detracts from their core literacy purpose.

² *Case Study: Norfolk's Health Libraries*, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (30 November 2016).

³ *Op. cit.*, *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016–2021*, section 5.5.

⁴ ‘Stronger, more resilient communities: how libraries deliver’, Julia Chandler, *DCMS Libraries Blog* (5 September 2016).

Irrespective, this is the strategic direction in which public libraries were taken, and for the next few years, Libraries Taskforce reported on the progress of this twice yearly,⁵ during which time libraries increased digitisation and the provision of Wi-Fi for users.

Then, in 2020⁶, Arts Council England (ACE) assumed the role of the national development agency for libraries, and the focus for libraries formally became:

- Health and Wellbeing;
- Information and Digital;
- Reading and Creativity;
- Culture.

With this new role, ACE became responsible for administering much of the DCMS library funding.

2022–2024: Libraries are fighting for survival

January 2024 saw the publication of *An independent review of English public libraries*,⁷ a report by Baroness Elizabeth Sanderson of Welton that looked at library provision across England. The report was commissioned by Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay in September 2022 to:

‘... engage widely – both within the libraries sector and beyond – to get to the heart of the issues currently facing the sector and to make some practical recommendations to inform the development of a new government libraries strategy.’⁸

The following challenges were identified:

1. A lack of recognition across government, locally and nationally, of the work that libraries do ...
2. A lack of awareness among the general public of what the modern-day library offers ...
3. A lack of comprehensive data on our libraries. We do not have an accurate national picture of how libraries are performing across the country. Nor are libraries able to prove, to an acceptable standard, just how much they contribute to key agendas from literacy to skills to health and wellbeing.
4. A better sense as to what the government wants to see from our libraries.

⁵ *Progress Reports*, Libraries Taskforce, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2015 to 2020).

⁶ *Libraries Taskforce: six month progress report (October 2019 to March 2020)*, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2 November 2020).

⁷ *Policy paper: An independent review of English public libraries*, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2024), ‘4. An expanded library membership’.

⁸ *Policy paper: An independent review of English public libraries – Lord Parkinson’s response*, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2024).

The report recommends:

1. The establishment of a national data hub to better evidence the role libraries play in our society
2. A national branding campaign to raise awareness of our libraries
3. The closer involvement of the British Library
4. An expanded library membership
5. A stronger volunteer network
6. The creation of a Libraries Minister and a more joined-up approach within government
7. The establishment of a Libraries Laureate
8. A change to the timing of Libraries Week to better involve politicians nationally

The challenges point to a lost connection between libraries and the public, and to the loss of purpose experienced by libraries. Despite being positively disposed towards libraries in principle, in practice people generally do not find them useful, and under current circumstances it seems unlikely that these recommendations will change that. As a source of reference data, the internet is now the ‘go-to’ resource. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, first published in 1768, was last printed in 2010 and now resides online only. Increasingly our interactions with local government, for a while facilitated through libraries, are also now expected to be online.

By March 2024, the sentiment expressed by Lord Parkinson ⁹ sounded like wishful thinking:

‘Museums and libraries are the bedrock of the community across the country, helping to inspire the creativity and curiosity of young people and begin lifelong passions for reading, learning, history and the arts.’

Literacy is more important than ever in the modern world, yet library usage has been in decline for decades. Books are considerably more affordable than in the heyday of libraries as well as being more available than ever before. Online retailers offer next day delivery and eReaders deliver your next read instantly.

Despite all that, reading for pleasure as a leisure activity amongst young people has declined sharply with a recent survey finding it to be at its lowest level in 19 years ¹⁰. The National Literacy Agency ¹¹ survey found a drop of 8.8% in the number of young people reading for pleasure in 2024 compared with 2023. They concluded – demanded even – that something must be done:

⁹ [Press release: Nearly 70 museums and libraries across England to benefit from £33 million boost](#), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (25 March 2024).

¹⁰ [Children and young people's reading in 2024](#), Christina Clark, Irene Picton, Aimee Cole and Nick Oram, National Literacy Trust (November 2024).

¹¹ [Children and young people's reading in 2024 HTML Summary](#), National Literacy Trust (06 November 2024).

*'... the National Literacy Trust is calling on the government to urgently form a reading taskforce and action plan with multi-sector partners to address declining rates of reading enjoyment and, in its curriculum and assessment review, prioritise reading for pleasure alongside the skills that are vital in the development of confident, motivated readers.'*¹²

Worse than this, literacy rates in the UK are poor, with high levels of functional illiteracy amongst adults. Poor literacy skills are prevalent right across the UK and affect:¹³

- 1 in 6 (18%) of adults aged 16 to 65 in England
- 1 in 8 (12%) of adults in Wales
- 1 in 4 (26.7%) of adults in Scotland
- 1 in 5 (17.4%) of adults in Northern Ireland

Amongst children, government data indicate a worrying lack of achievement in England¹⁴ with fewer than two-thirds meeting expected standards for their age:

Percentage meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) 61% up from 60% in 2023.

These statistics cover the attainment of year 6 pupils who took assessments in summer 2024. These pupils experienced disruption to their learning during the pandemic, particularly at the end of year 2 and in year 3.

In individual subjects, attainment increased in reading, writing and science compared to 2023. Attainment remained the same in maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling.

In reading, 74% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 73% in 2023.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ [Adult literacy: Information on adult literacy in the UK and our Books Unlocked programme](#), National Literacy Trust.

¹⁴ [Academic year 2023/24: Key stage 2 attainment: National headlines](#), Department for Education (9 July 2024).

*In **maths**, 73% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged since 2023.*

*In **writing**, 72% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 71% in 2023.*

*In **grammar, punctuation and spelling**, 72% of pupils met the expected standard, unchanged since 2023.*

*In **science**, 81% of pupils met the expected standard, up from 80% in 2023.'*

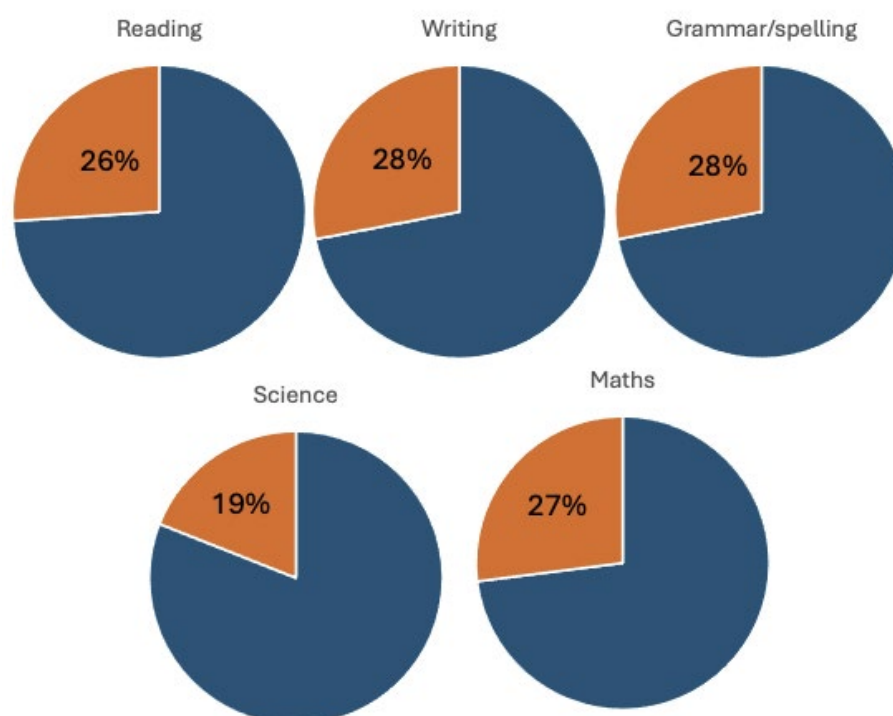


Fig. 3 – More than a quarter of children failed to reach the expected standard in all subjects except science.

In reading, writing, grammar and maths, more than a quarter of pupils did not reach the expected standard for their age group.

The problem is even more acute among disadvantaged children ¹⁵ who struggle with an attainment gap of 4.6 months on starting primary school when compared with their more affluent classmates. That gap doubles to 9 months by the time children leave primary school, and there are fears that the disruption to education resulting from COVID-19 has made this worse.

And all the while, the long term trend is of a decline in library footfall. ¹⁶

¹⁵ [COVID-19 and literacy: The attainment gap and learning loss](#), National Literacy Trust.

¹⁶ The Library Taskforce and the Parkinson Report were both set up to address the issue of declining library usage. Although the post-COVID period showed an uplift between 2022/23, it was still lower than 2019/20 period. Cf. [Annual Libraries Report 2023 to 2024](#), DCMS (September 2024).

How are libraries funded, and how do they operate?

Our public libraries are almost entirely funded through taxation, but the allocation of funding is complex and opaque.

Local Councils

Local Councils have a statutory duty to deliver library provision ¹⁷ and allocate funding from local taxation to cover staffing, facilities, books and other media. Income is supplemented by charitable and philanthropic donations to libraries, fund-raising initiatives such as book sales and fees charged for events, use of meeting rooms and the provision of services such as photocopying.

As a result, different parts of the country have very different levels of library provision.

DCMS and Arts Council England

Public libraries are indirectly supported by the Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) *via* project-based grants awarded by Arts Council England (ACE).

DCMS funding is allocated either as a part of the Libraries Improvement Fund, or as a grant to deliver specific literacy programs that comprise a four-year portfolio of projects. The organisations that deliver these projects are private companies that prepare business plans which are assessed by ACE for inclusion in each funding portfolio.

The successful organisations are designated either:

- National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs): established organisations that receive long-term, core support from Arts Council England for their ongoing work; or
- Investment Principles Support Organisation (IPSOs): typically smaller, these project-based organisations receive funding for specific projects or initiatives

Each NPO or IPSO receives funding from ACE that must be used to:

- Invest in projects, research and infrastructure;
- Advocate for the value and impact of libraries; or
- Help libraries to develop their practice.

The 2023–2026 Arts Council England portfolio consists of 77 library and literature NPOs and IPSOs ¹⁸ with total annual funding of £20.19 million. The successful applicants for the 2023–26 portfolio comprise a mix of local authorities and private companies, 18 of which are libraries. The annual funding shared between these 18 libraries is £4.16 million with the rest split across the other 59 organisations, with many of them relying on local libraries to deliver their funded projects.

¹⁷ [Section 1](#), Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

¹⁸ Cf. [2023–26 Investment Programme](#), Arts Council England.

Library Funding

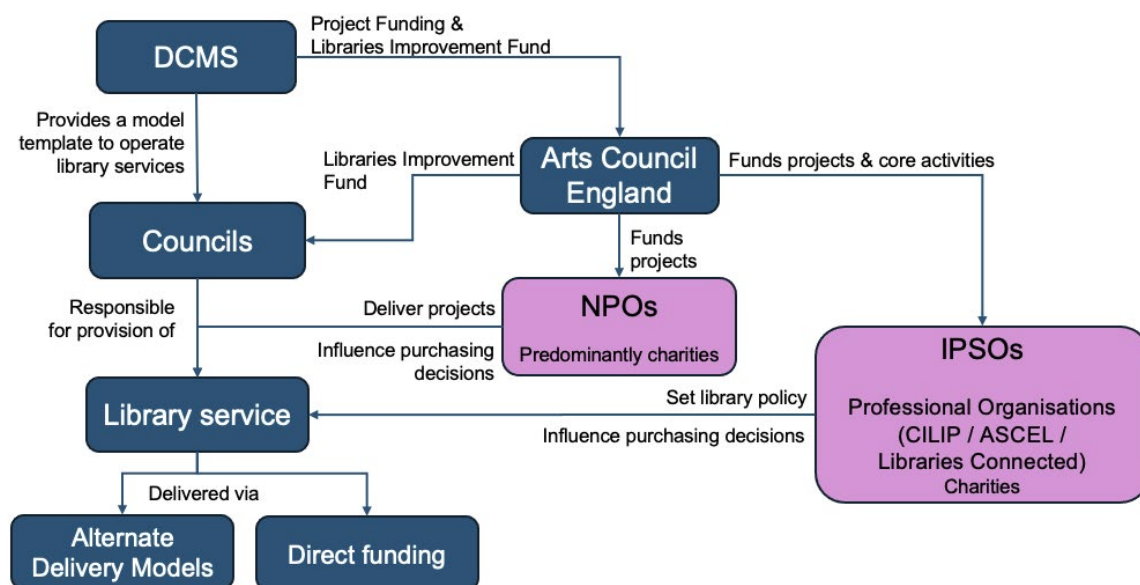


Fig. 4 – DCMS funds are allocated to NPOs and IPSOs by Arts Council England.

The librarians' professional organisations are IPSOs, and other organisations are NPOs. Whilst the Libraries Improvement Fund is allocated to council managed projects to improve library infrastructure, the 'softer' projects are delivered by the NPOs and IPSOs as part of the ACE 4-year funding portfolio.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request ¹⁹ reporting the breakdown of successful award applications between 2019 and 2023 revealed that ACE funding is overwhelmingly allocated to private companies.

<i>Awards from 2019 to 2023</i>	Local Authorities	Private Companies
Number of funded organisations	49	243
Number of awards made	80	406
Total value of awards made	£8,608,823	£48,894,827

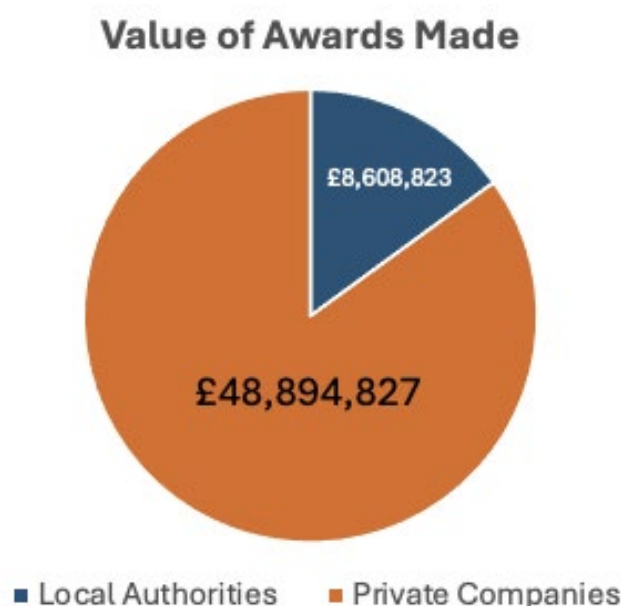


Fig. 5 – More than 80% of Arts Council England funding for library and literature support goes to private companies.

Local authorities have increasingly outsourced non-statutory deliverables to private companies for some years now, so the disparity is not surprising, but it does indicate the size of the opportunity for third parties, and it goes some way to explaining why there are so many private companies working in this area. Furthermore, because any work in the library sector is considered to be of unquestioned public benefit, the vast majority of these companies are registered charities enjoying valuable tax breaks.

A full list of library and literature NPOs and IPSOs comprising the 2023–26 investment programme is available in Appendix A.

Ten organisations in the 2023–26 portfolio have each been awarded more than £300k a year:

Applicant Name	2023–26 Annual Funding (Offered 4 Nov 2022)
BookTrust	£5,763,099
Culture Squared CIC	£1,055,520
National Centre for Writing	£586,582
Libraries Connected	£509,200
Culture, Learning and Libraries (Midlands) – Library Service	£504,599
The Reading Agency	£484,141
Apples and Snakes	£463,372
New Writing North	£428,234
Arvon Foundation	£395,411
The Poetry Society	£361,083

Of these ten organisations, eight are charities set up to deliver better literacy outcomes for the general public. The two that are not registered charities are Culture Squared CIC ²⁰ (a Community Interest Company) and Culture, Learning and Libraries (Midlands) ²¹ (a community benefit society).

Core activities include the gifting of books to families with young children, organising literary festivals, creating reading lists and setting children's reading challenges. Many have been pursuing these outcomes for years. The Reading Agency was first incorporated as Well Worth Reading in 2002 while BookTrust was known as National Book League when it first registered with Companies House all the way back in 1925. ²²

Some of these organisations work with the library service directly, holding events in local libraries such as regular parent and child reading groups (BookTrust) ²³, recommending and distributing reading lists (The Reading Agency), training, advocacy and advice (Libraries Connected) and so on.

Meanwhile, Culture Squared, a community interest company which runs the Bradford Literature Festival from an address at Bradford University, has benefitted from significant grant awards totalling more than £3m between 2017 and 2023. ²⁴ These grants were awarded to Culture Squared by DCMS, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and The Pears Foundation.

Arts Council England refused an FOI request for a detailed list of projects that each of these organisations has been funded for (including expected deliverables and how outcomes will be measured). Their position is that this information is:

'... exempt under Section 43.2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Prejudicial to commercial interests)'

Follow up FOIs were submitted, revealing no new useful information. ²⁵ Despite Arts Council England being transparent – and rightly so – about how much money is given to each organisation, it seems they have no detail about deliverables beyond business-as-usual.

²⁰ [Culture Squared CIC](#), Companies House.

²¹ [Culture, Learning and Libraries \(Midlands\)](#), Finance Conduct Authority (FCA).

²² [BookTrust](#), Companies House.

²³ [Annual Report 2023/24](#), BookTrust.

²⁴ [Culture Squared CIC](#), 360Giving Data Standard (2017–2023).

²⁵ [FOI: Portfolio Funding Projects 2023-26](#), Arts Council England (26 February 2025).

It is axiomatic in the sector that reading for pleasure improves lives across a range of metrics, and therefore money continues to be made available for projects promising to deliver improvements to literacy rates:

'Reading for pleasure delivers enormous benefits for children of all ages. It builds reading and literacy confidence as well as influencing children's health and wellbeing, future academic achievement and adult life chances.' ²⁶

The conviction that reading for pleasure delivers public benefits combined with a strong public desire to keep libraries open and limited resources to do so has created a gap for the charity sector. Almost any organisation promising to deliver better literacy outcomes or library improvements is pushing at an open door.

There is public money available for those who understand the funding model and can submit bids for the funding of projects designed to arrest the decline in reading and libraries more generally.

2 – Libraries Lose Their Way

Lack of Strategic Direction

Libraries Taskforce reported that better data is needed to understand what people want from libraries. In 2024, Baroness Sanderson found that the general public lack awareness of the services and opportunities libraries already offer, and that there is insufficient clarity as to what the government would like libraries to deliver. The National Literacy Trust reported a sharp decline in reading for pleasure ²⁷ amongst children.

If libraries are to survive and even thrive into the 21st century these fundamental problems must be addressed, and that will require a funded strategy. There is, however, very little evidence of the necessary strategic direction having been set or even understood.

Awards made by Arts Council England in respect of libraries and literature are solely at the discretion of ACE ²⁸ but the projects that ACE funds do not appear to tackle any of the issues raised. Instead there is a set of small, disparate, and generally local initiatives, which includes those delivered by the librarians' own professional organisations.

²⁶ Parentkind and The Reading Agency – *Reading as a Family: Top tips for reading together resources*, The Reading Agency.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, *Children and young people's reading in 2024 HTML Summary*, National Literacy Trust (06 November 2024).

²⁸ FOI: DCMS Funding to Arts Council England for Libraries & Details (22 November 2024).

The Youth Engagement Network is one such example from the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL). This initiative aims to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard. A pilot project, funded by Arts Council England, was started in September 2023²⁹ that delivered:

- Art wall pieces (Luton);
- A scrapbook and monthly meetings (Norfolk);
- A variety of story related props and scenarios for children with complex autism needs (Kirklees);
- A games club (Newham);
- Various activities and additions to make the library more entertaining including a smoothie station and air hockey (Slough);
- Improved borrow box, a Comic Con, and additional charging points (Barnstable).

Whilst all of these projects were self-reported as having positive outcomes for the children and young people involved, it is not clear how any of them make libraries more attractive to other children, and indeed they might make libraries less attractive to adults. The positive outcomes seem principally to derive from the young people's involvement with the projects themselves, with no hard evidence of general public benefits resulting from the changes made to the libraries.³⁰ Moreover, projects of this type are not scalable either temporally or geographically for the library service.

Focus on Footfall

With libraries under pressure to increase footfall, and with NPOs needing to justify their continued funding, libraries could have chosen to advertise more widely what they already offer or conducted market research to discover what people need from their local library.

Instead, they are increasingly providing new and unrelated public services:

- Use of library real estate for 'well-being' purposes, such as NHS clinics and groups to alleviate social isolation (e.g. knit and natter);
- Community hubs that aim to address social deprivation (such as the warm space initiative);
- Support for non-literary arts, including turning libraries into de facto art galleries, and holding music events;
- Entertainment events, including theatre-based activities.

These activities go well beyond the fundamental remit of libraries to improve literacy among the general population. However, they do provide valuable public services and as a result there is very little pushback from councillors, Arts Council England, library staff or the general public despite the repurposing of funds.

²⁹ [Impact: New Schools Library Services research, ASCEL.](#)

³⁰ [ASCEL Youth Engagement Network Pilot: Executive Summary \(September 2024\).](#)

Organisations that benefit from Arts Council England funding are thus encouraged to avoid addressing the difficult problems identified by Sanderson and the National Literacy Trust when devising projects for which they can be funded. More people using the library buildings *for other purposes* is unlikely to encourage reading or improve literacy.

Even though much of this work is valuable, using ACE awards to subsidise the NHS and social care is unlikely to help *libraries* longer term. As community hubs, wellness centres and NHS outposts, the library's principal offering as a place of learning, information and literary excellence is diluted and its clarity of purpose further diminished.

Ideological Capture

Without a clear strategic direction organisations are vulnerable to individuals and organisations promoting political or philosophical beliefs and to current, sometimes harmful, societal trends. In recent years, for example, 'social justice' activists have been seeding extreme, non-factual and unscientific ideas relating to gender identity ideology across all public institutions. These beliefs and ways of working are now prevalent in the library service, including in the librarians' professional body, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).

Libraries are expected to be politically non-partisan; to promote no religion above any other, nor to encourage atheism. As a public service, the Equality Act 2010 with its Public Sector Equality Duty requires libraries to serve all users equally regardless of who they are or what they believe. There is an expectation of neutrality.



Fig. 6 – CILIP's ethical framework.

CILIP's ethical principles ³¹ indicate that they too think impartiality is important and in their clarifying notes they say that ethical Information Professionals should commit to:

Impartiality and the avoidance of inappropriate bias
Impartiality
The unbiased, equal treatment of others.
Inappropriate bias
Value judgments that are not suitable or proper in the circumstances'

It seems, however, that CILIP have abandoned neutrality.

Their guidance for librarians – *Managing safe and inclusive public library services* ³² – is riddled with activist language throughout and encourages librarians to facilitate 'social justice' aims. The only 'reading session' it cites by name is Drag Queen Storytime, and it makes the astonishing claim that '[t]he idea of libraries as a 'neutral' service has fallen increasingly out of favour in recent years'. They do not mention with whom it has fallen out of favour.

As a registered charity, CILIP is obliged to report annually on actions taken to deliver on its charitable objectives as well as funding and payments. In its most recently available annual report ³³ (for the year ended 31 December 2022), on page 5 CILIP give their strategic priorities as:

- Equity and social justice
- Digital transformation
- Environmental sustainability
- Leadership at every level

The report states that 'CILIP's work is inspired by our values, which includes a commitment to social justice, intellectual freedom and evidence based practice', all of which sounds desirable but is well beyond the scope of its Royal Charter ³⁴ to 'promote education and knowledge through the establishment and development of libraries and information services and to advance information science'.

The promotion of 'equity and social justice' and 'a commitment to social justice' sounds worryingly political in nature and is inappropriate for an organisation that delivers its charitable objectives through members employed by the public library service.

³¹ Cf. CILIP web page on their [Ethical Framework](#).

³² [Managing safe and inclusive public library services: A practical guide](#), CILIP (September 2023).

³³ [Trustees' Report & Financial Statements](#), CILIP (31 December 2022).

³⁴ Cf. CILIP web page on their [Royal Charter](#).

CILIP is funded principally through membership fees, bequests and donations, and through some government grants. Key achievements reported for 2022 include:

- A successful *libraries week* with a focus on lifelong learning
- The launch of *Green Libraries Partnership* promoting the role of libraries in addressing climate change and sustainability
- The *Carnegie Greenaway Awards*
- Support for communities through 'Warm Welcome'
- A focus on EDI and Diversity Networks for CILIP members

These outcomes are delivered through libraries by library staff, but librarians are not paid to address a climate change or to run community hubs, and EDI and Diversity Networks for librarians are not a public benefit of library provision.

There are three Diversity Networks within CILIP – the Global Majority Network, the LGBTQ+ Network and the Disability Network – and members are not required to be CILIP members leaving CILIP vulnerable to activist pressure:

'CILIP's Diversity Networks demonstrate our commitment to being an ally to individuals and groups that are under-represented, both in society and in our profession. Each of the Networks provide support and a platform for library, knowledge and information workers from diverse backgrounds, and their allies. You can share your experiences, get advice, find events and gain insight and analysis through exclusive articles and resources. Membership is free and open to CILIP members and non-members.' ³⁵

The LGBTQ+ Network in particular appears to be very proactive with terms of reference that go significantly beyond supporting CILIP members, even proposing template responses for libraries to use in order to dismiss complaints from members of the public. ³⁶

³⁵ Cf. CILIP web page on their [Diversity Networks](#).

³⁶ Cf. [CILIP LGBTQ+ Network Interim Terms of Reference](#).

CILIP is by no means unusual in having implemented these new ideas with which staff are expected to comply and promote. Local Councils tend to promote similar policies, for example Manchester City Council passed a motion that ‘Trans Rights Are Human Rights’³⁷ while Arts Council England was found to have discriminated against employee Denise Fahmy for her gender critical views.³⁸ Even the culture secretary herself has declared strong support for ‘transgender rights’.³⁹

All these organisations set the tone for how libraries operate, the book choices made, and the events that are hosted and promoted.

Misplaced Trust

Libraries are not just highly valued institutions; they are high trust institutions too. The public trusts that they are run for public benefit, that funding is used appropriately, and most importantly, the public trusts that information available in the public library (particularly where other services are signposted – be those private or otherwise) is properly vetted and of appropriate quality.

High trust organisations that do not have clarity of purpose, that are casting around for projects on which to spend grant funding, that have weak governance structures and an affinity to ‘good causes’ are vulnerable to those looking for opportunities to exploit funding for commercial benefit. They can become a gateway through which the Trojan horse of ideological agendas are delivered.

The public should be able to trust that:

- Public money allocated to library projects delivers better libraries and improved literacy;
- Appropriate controls prevent those with influence from benefitting via other commercial interests (i.e. no conflict of interests);
- Projects do not promote any ideological, political or faith-based outcomes;
- Outcomes are objectively measured, and funded improvements are delivered in a timely fashion (and where they are not, some effort is made to understand why projects failed).

The Reading Agency and its well-regarded *Reading Well* scheme provides a case study for how such trust can be exploited across every one of these metrics.

³⁷ [Agenda & Minutes](#), Manchester City Council, Council (Wednesday 2nd February 2022, 10.00am).

³⁸ [Judgement](#), *Ms D Fahmy v Arts Council England*: 6000042/2022.

³⁹ [‘Lisa Nandy defends transgender support after JK Rowling attack’](#), Sam Blewett, *The Independent*, Thursday 16 November 2023.

3 – The Reading Agency and the *Reading Well* Scheme

The Reading Agency is an organisation that has developed a highly trusted brand within the library sector, and that trust has been inherited by its flagship initiative the *Reading Well* scheme. As a highly respected literacy organisation, it is a multi-year recipient of significant funding from Arts Council England.

Despite all this there is evidence that the *Reading Well* scheme:

- Lacks appropriate controls to prevent those with influence from benefitting *via* other commercial interests (i.e. there are conflicts of interest);
- Promotes ideological, political or faith-based outcomes;
- Delivers outcomes that are not objectively measured

There are currently four *Reading Well* book lists:

- *Reading Well for Dementia*;
- *Reading Well for Mental Health*;
- *Reading Well for Teens*;
- *Reading Well for Children*

The Reading Agency has for some years been a strategic partner to the Society of Chief Librarians, Arts Council England, and the Libraries Taskforce. It has undertaken research around the benefits of reading for pleasure that is cited in the *Libraries Deliver* report although links to this research are now broken. Indeed, The Reading Agency is referenced in that report no fewer than 14 times.

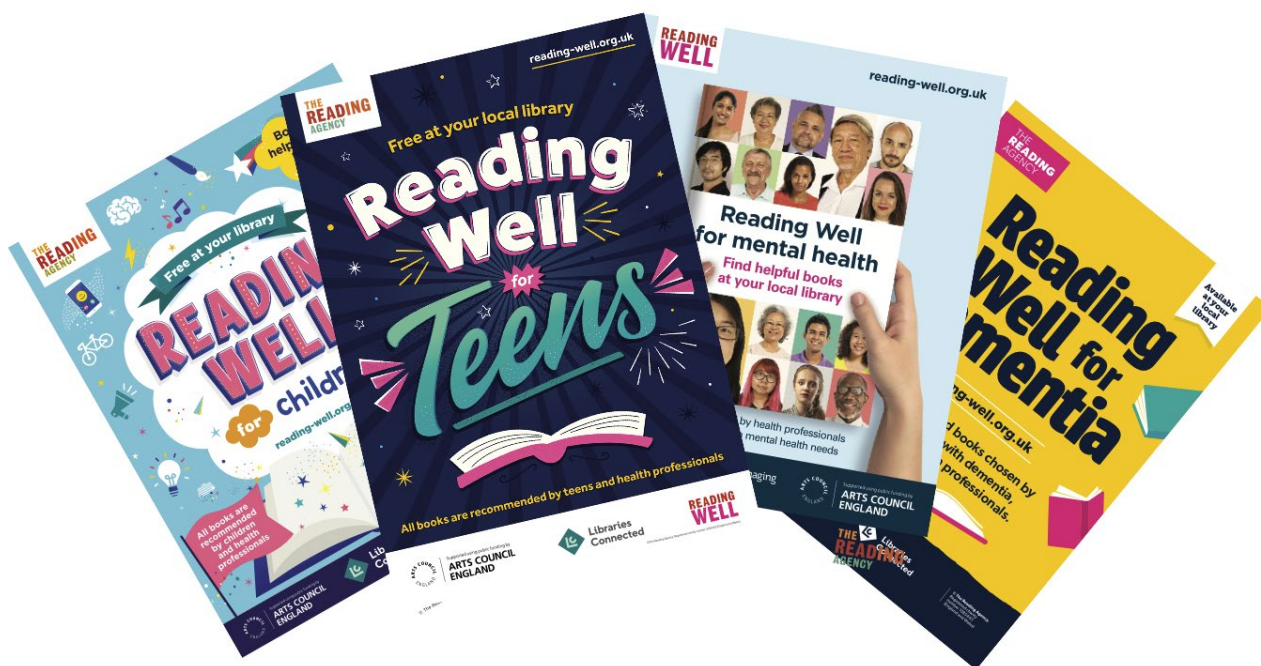


Fig. 7 – *Reading Well* promotional material.

Books on Prescription

Although The Reading Agency is nominally funded by ACE to promote literature and improve literacy the *Reading Well* scheme does not aim to advance reading ability. Instead, it leans into the ‘health and wellbeing’ goal agreed by ACE in 2020 and positions itself as a way to improve mental health and wellbeing. It is a reading-based self-help programme⁴⁰ that is endorsed by the NHS⁴¹ and the DCMS.

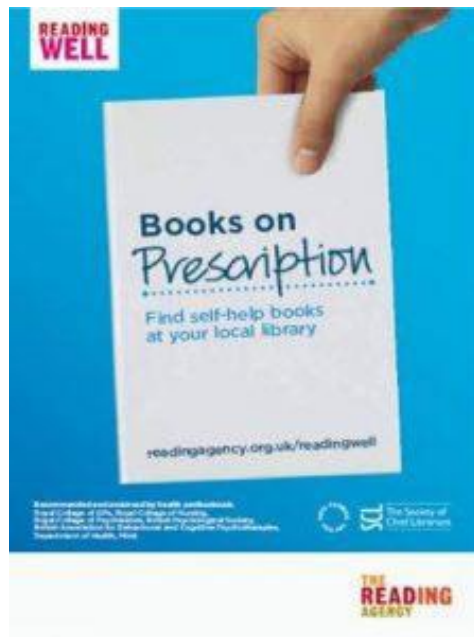


Fig. 8 – *Reading Well* promotional material.

The Reading Well Books on Prescription Scheme was first rolled out in 2013 providing self-help reading for adults based on cognitive behavioural therapy for a range of common conditions such as anxiety, phobias, depression and some eating disorders. In 2015 the scheme was extended to support dementia sufferers and their carers.⁴² In 2016 a *Reading Well for young people* list was added which became *Reading Well for Teens* in 2022.

This scheme was created by The Reading Agency who employ staff to develop and curate the lists, and to publish and promote them. However, The Reading Agency depends on public libraries and therefore librarians to deliver the scheme, and there is an expectation that librarians will be trained to do this.⁴³

It is important to note here that librarians are not health professionals, libraries are not medical settings, and self-help books are rarely works of proven scientific or artistic merit, nor are they intended to be. Books can help people to overcome mental illness and improve their wellbeing, but if they are to be purchased using public funds and placed on library shelves for that purpose, there should be some consideration as to the appropriate funding source.

It is all public money, but it matters for reasons of transparency and accountability that different funding streams remain discrete. Money that is allocated to library projects should deliver better libraries and improved literacy. If libraries increasingly become NHS outposts, pockets of NHS spending are cross-subsidised and not accounted for as NHS spending.

⁴⁰ [Reading Well programme](#), The Reading Agency.

⁴¹ [Accessibility, health and wellbeing in libraries](#), North Northamptonshire Council (24 July 2024).

⁴² [Reading Well FAQ](#), The Reading Agency.

⁴³ [Reading Well Staff Training Presentation](#), The Reading Agency.

The process by which 'medical' books are selected for *Reading Well* lists raises a few questions and concerns, too. For example, are publishers and authors best placed to know which books are likely to be clinically helpful? The Reading Agency states:

'Our endorsement process means we are unable to add titles to existing lists once they have been finalised.

*At the start of every new or updated scheme we send out a tender to submission to publishers and authors, inviting them to submit titles they think would be suitable for inclusion. This tender to submission goes out publicly, as well as to all our current publishing partners and on request.'*⁴⁴

Books cannot be assumed to be beneficial without evidence. For example, *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk, a book aimed at the healing of trauma, was a runaway best seller for the best part of a decade but has recently been challenged as:

*'... deeply problematic for a range of reasons; ideas that ignore large aspects of the scientific knowledge base, or misrepresent the state of the science, or are perilously close to or crossover into pseudoscience.'*⁴⁵

If the aim is to deliver health and wellbeing treatment through books, it is vital that the books that are recommended are scientific and objective and do not result in undesired outcomes. If there is no data about who is reading these books, what medical conditions they may or may not have (particularly important in the case of children and vulnerable adults) and what impact the books have on them, we simply do not know if books on prescription or the *Reading Well* scheme is beneficial. It might be simply a waste of public money or worse, it could be actively harmful.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, *Reading Well FAQ*.

⁴⁵ Cox, K. S., & Codd, R. T. (2023). '[Advocates of Research-Supported Treatments for PTSD are Losing in Lots of Ways: What Are We Going to Do About It?](https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315231206754)', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 34(4), 347–359. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315231206754> (Original work published 2024.)

What are the Benefits of Reading Well?

There are no generally available statistics for *Reading Well*, and the outcomes that are reported by The Reading Agency are vague:

*'Over 3.8 million Reading Well books have been borrowed since 2013. 92% of users find their books helpful and 81% say their book helped them understand more about their health needs.'*⁴⁶

It is likely that many books on the *Reading Well* lists are perceived by those who read them to be beneficial, but we do not know how many people borrowed one of these books because it is on a *Reading Well* list. Although there is some data on how often books on the lists are borrowed (see below), we do not know which books are borrowed regularly and which books are perhaps not borrowed at all. Neither do we know the size of the cohort who self-report positive results, nor how they were identified as *Reading Well* users.

The programme was boosted in 2021 when ACE awarded £3.5 million to The Reading Agency⁴⁷ for a project called 'Reading Well / Reading Friends' which aimed to address loneliness by starting conversations as a response to the social isolation created by the COVID lockdowns of the previous year.

The self-reported outcomes are, as ever, good, but the data are superficial. For example:

'Of the Reading Friends participants, we found that:

- *72% of participants agreed that Reading Friends helped them feel less lonely*
- *83% of participants agreed that Reading Friends helped them to feel more connected to other people*
- *74% of participants agreed that Reading Friends added purpose to their week'*

There is, however, no data on how many 'friends' participated, nor any indication as to whether they were from that population of people who were the intended target of any intervention to address their loneliness. There is also no mention of the time between participation and the reported outcome, nor mention of any negative impacts.

The findings report an unimpressive take up of the books distributed by this project, although it must be remembered that the period for which figures are reported were subject to lockdowns with libraries re-opening on 12 April 2021. During this period, however, the vast majority of books distributed were never loaned:

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, *Reading Well FAQ*.

⁴⁷ *Read, Talk, Share Evaluation: Reach and Impact*, The Reading Agency (17 December 2021).

'Our Reading Well rollout saw 311,783 books distributed to 2,975 public and community managed libraries across 150 authorities. From January – May 2021, these books were loaned 70,248 times'

The sizeable investment in *Reading Well* also deserves to be scrutinised as to its effectiveness. Mental health issues do not present consistently for different people, and interventions that work for one group of people do not always work for others. Indeed, so many medical interventions undertaken in good faith have later been found to be at best unnecessary and ineffective, and at worst risky and harmful, that in 2018 NHS England proposed an action plan to identify such interventions and stop using them.⁴⁸

Many people benefit from self-help books, but books are unlikely to help those who are clinically ill. For some of this cohort, being directed to *Reading Well* instead of to a qualified clinician might delay treatment. At worst, a person might not get the treatment they need at all or their condition may be made worse.

Reading Well for Mental Health includes *Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world* by Professor Mark Williams and Dr Danny Penman. This book is a best seller, but recommendations from mental health professionals would be more compelling if it is to be a health intervention than endorsements from Sir Kenneth Branagh and Ruby Wax. Not least because 'mindfulness' has been shown to cause significant and lasting adverse effects such as anxiety and depression. This makes the inclusion of *A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled* by the latter celebrity influencer (Wax) even more questionable and disconcerting. It might be an entertaining read, but she is not a mental health professional.

All ACE funded projects should be collecting robust data on the extent to which their promised outcomes are achieved. Better data on what people want is a key recommendation from Libraries Taskforce,⁵¹ and the first recommendation of the Sanderson report. In any case, robust data collection should be standard practice for all taxpayer funded projects.

When those publicly funded projects include mental health interventions, a lack of follow up data is positively negligent. We know that books can have a profound effect on people, and it is irresponsible to assume without any follow up data that the effects are always beneficial, particularly when those books are specifically intended for vulnerable or unwell people.

⁴⁸ [NHS England action to stop patients undergoing ineffective and risky treatments](#), NHS England (30 June 2018).

⁴⁹ Cf. [The Reading Agency promotion of *Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world*](#), by Professor Mark Williams and Dr Danny Penman.

⁵⁰ ['Meditation can be harmful – and can even make mental health problems worse'](#), Miguel Farias, *The Conversation* (19 July 2024).

⁵¹ [The Libraries Taskforce Closure Report](#), Arts Council England (2020), section 3.6.

The Commercial Value of the *Reading Well* Scheme

Getting a title onto a *Reading Well* list is commercially valuable. As The Reading Agency's website makes clear, every library in England and Wales has at least one copy of every title:⁵²

'You can borrow books from the collections from your local library. Many of the Reading Well titles are also available to borrow as e-books and audiobooks. Reading Well is a shared programme with Libraries Connected as part of the Universal Public Library Health and Wellbeing Offer.'

'The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has funded a universal roll-out of the reading lists to support mental health to every library service across England. Welsh Government have funded every library authority in Wales to deliver the scheme bilingually in Welsh and English.'

As of May 2024, there were 3,159 libraries in England and Wales. Freedom of Information Act requests reveal that the initial funding from DCMS was £3.5 million of which £2.5 million was a one-off award to cover the cost of the *Reading Well* collections including eBooks and audio books. Between 2018 and 2024, Welsh libraries were awarded more than £1.8 million by the Welsh Government to purchase these titles, some of which were also made available in Welsh language translations.

Furthermore, the cost to supply each library with at least one copy of the 115 books on the *Reading Well* lists does not end with the initial funding if libraries replace worn or lost books, buy additional copies, or buy new books when the *Reading Well* lists are updated. No data is available for those additional costs.

It is to be expected that key individuals in the publishing industry will have connections to organisations like BookTrust and The Reading Agency. However, a small number of individuals hold a surprisingly large number of influential positions across these organisations.⁵³

⁵² *Op. cit.*, [Reading Well programme](#), The Reading Agency.

⁵³ Cf. The Reading Agency web-page on [their Board of Trustees](#).

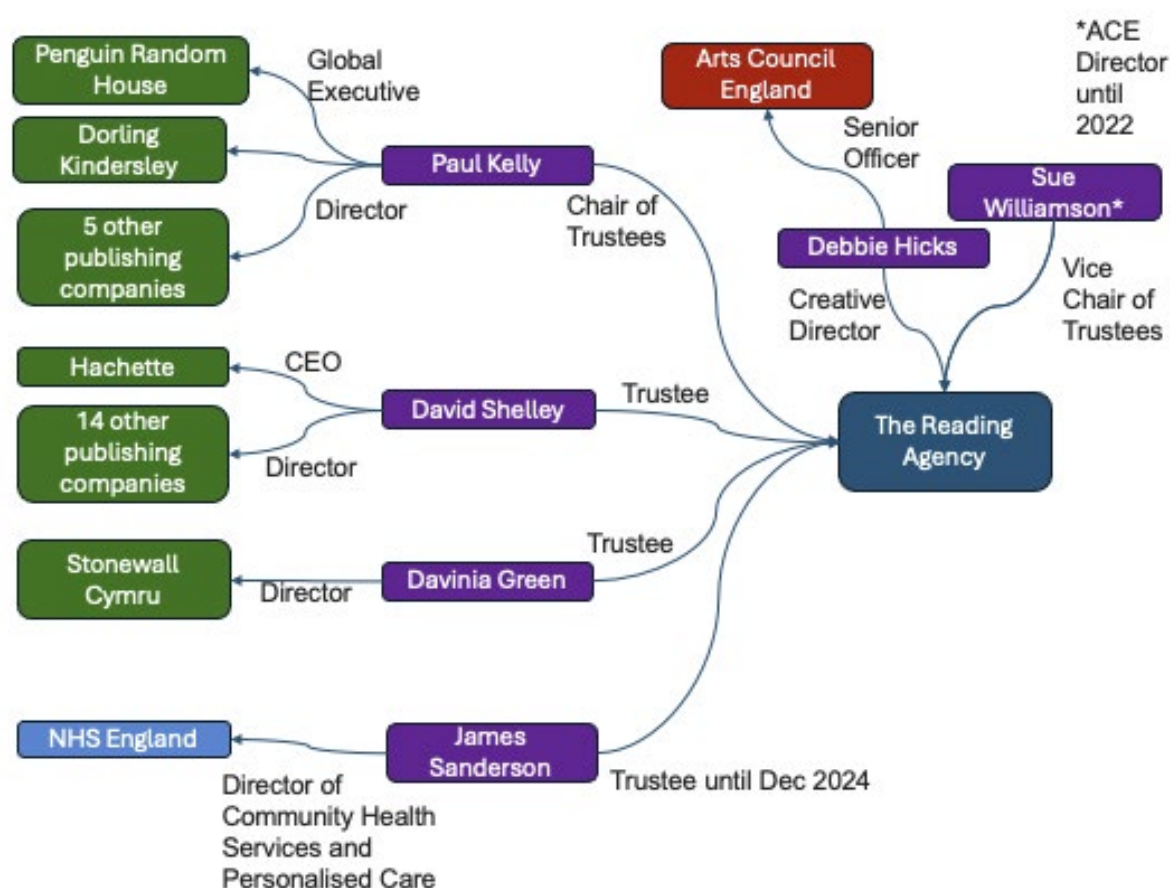


Fig. 9 – Influence of The Reading Agency Trustees as at April 2025.

Between them, David Shelley and Paul Kelly hold directorships at 23 publishing houses and both are Trustee Directors of The Reading Agency.

David Shelley is a Director at Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, and CEO at Hachette. Hachette owns or trades under the name of Franklin Watts,⁵⁴ Jessica Kingsley Publishers⁵⁵ and Wayland.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the portfolio of publishing houses under David Shelley's influence own a high proportion of the titles on the *Reading Well* book lists.

Whilst there is no evidence of any wrongdoing, of the 33 books in the current *Reading Well* for Children list,⁵⁷ 16 are from Hachette or Hodder, including eight titles from Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Overall, more than half of the *Reading Well* titles are published by companies where David Shelley is CEO or a Director, with the *Reading Well* for mental health list having 25 of 37 titles owned by Shelley's companies.

⁵⁴ [Hachette List of Education Books](#) from Franklin Watts Wayland.

⁵⁵ [Jessica Kingsley Publications](#), bought by Hachette in 2017.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, Hachette List of Franklin Watts Wayland educational books.

⁵⁷ See Appendix B.

The complete current *Reading Well* lists are available in Appendix B.

<i>Reading Well</i> List	Number of Titles	Number supplied by David Shelley's companies
<i>Reading Well for children</i>	33	16
<i>Reading Well for teens</i>	26	9
<i>Reading Well for dementia</i>	19	11
<i>Reading Well for mental health</i>	37	25
Totals	115	61

Arts Council England support for *Reading Well* has been lucrative for those publishing houses whose titles are on the lists, and it seems that some publishing houses, for example Jessica Kingsley Publishers and Robinson (an imprint of Little Brown), specialise in publishing the books that comprise these lists. Close links to the organisation creating and curating the lists can only be helpful.

If these *Reading Well* book lists had been deliberately skewed to favour publishers with which a Trustee at The Reading Agency has a commercial relationship, that might be in breach of ACE General Terms & Conditions for grant awards.⁵⁸

‘8.9 When procuring goods, work or services that are funded in whole or in part by the Grant Agreement you must ensure you are:

8.9.1 getting the best value for money when buying goods, works or services and ensuring that any procurement process is conducted in a transparent and proportionate manner and suppliers are treated equally, without discrimination.’

⁵⁸ *Standard terms and conditions for grants*, Arts Council England (01 December 2024 onwards), [section 8 ‘Conditions relating to assets or goods purchased with the grant’](#).

Selling Influence Beyond Reading Well

That The Reading Agency works closely with publishers is not a surprise. After all, publishers are the people who sift through the work of authors and transform the very best into books for the public to enjoy.

The Reading Agency, however, has a uniquely influential relationship with libraries as a charitable organisation funded largely by taxpayers to encourage reading and promote literacy skills. If The Reading Agency recommends books for purchase by public libraries, those recommendations should be entirely merit-based.

And yet, The Reading Agency advertises publisher subscription offers ⁵⁹ which effectively allow publishers to promote their books to librarians and reading groups with the expectation that libraries will popularise these titles.

The campaigns offered are not literacy campaigns, they are marketing campaigns.

Thirteen campaign types are listed including point of sale promotions, 'Read and Review', consumer insights and the promotion of digital assets through The Reading Agency's customer contacts. In other words, The Reading Agency is selling access to library users, librarians, teachers and children, and is selling readers' feedback to the publishers, without the knowledge or consent of anyone listed.

This income stream for The Reading Agency is only possible because it enjoys a privileged relationship with taxpayer-funded libraries.

Annual Enhanced+ Subscription: £4,250 + VAT	
4 Library campaigns with evaluation	
3 Read and Reviews initiatives featuring a selected review in 'Readers' Reviews' resource	
New 1 Consumer Insight focus group with two book clubs or a group of teachers or librarians	
Unlimited contributions to the Reading Groups for Everyone Noticeboard to share sets of books available for adult reading groups	
Opportunity for publisher spotlight article, highlighting 20 titles	
New Opportunity to send our 30 regional libraries representatives' proofs or advanced copies (July, October, January)	
New Access to our librarian noticeboard webpage	
New Access to an exclusive Research and Insight webpage	
Unlimited uploads to the resources database	
Receive our monthly exclusive Publishers' Newsletter	
Opportunity to suggest titles for inclusion in our themed booklists	
Invitation to present at the virtual Reading Partners Roadshow in November 2024	
Exclusive invitation to two working group meetings in June 2024 and February 2025	

Campaign Menu

Campaign Type	Audience	Host Platform	Feedback that we will share with you	Approximate Add-on cost *
PoS promotion: Point of sale (PoS) or activity packs (print or digital) promotion	Library users	Packs are requested from The Reading Agency's shop and used onsite or online. Publishers dispatch all physical resources	Collated social media posts or photos of library displays, reach and librarian feedback	£475 + VAT
Read and Review	Book clubs or individual librarians/teachers	Reading Groups for Everyone or Chatterbooks resource pages	Reader reviews sent to the publisher; one review included on a Reader Recommendations document	£400 + VAT
Consumer insight/reading group/ focus group	Book clubs, librarians or teachers	Online platforms e.g., Zoom, Teams	Reader insight and feedback from the focus group	£1,000+ VAT
Digital packs of downloadable assets (provided by the publisher) are promoted through our relevant websites and newsletters	Visitors to the Reading Groups for Everyone, Teachers' Reading Challenge or Summer Reading Challenge website	Website (either Reading Groups for Everyone or one of our audience-focused platforms such as Teachers' Reading Challenge or Summer Reading Challenge) and shared on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram	Resource page views, downloads of the digital resources, etc.	£375 + VAT

Fig. 10 – The Reading Agency literacy campaigns.

⁵⁹ Contained in The Reading Agency leaflets [collated here for reference](#).

Reading Well promotes a contested ideology

The world of publishing has enthusiastically embraced gender identity ideology (GII) to the extent that authors have lost opportunities and contracts if they have been unwilling to comply with the language and beliefs it demands. Jenny Lindsay, a Scottish poet, wrote *Hounded* ⁶⁰ detailing these harms because her career was destroyed by GII activists, ⁶¹ and authors Gillian Philip and Rachel Rooney have spoken publicly about their treatment within the publishing industry as a result of their rejection of GII. They are far from alone.

Hachette has embedded the requirement for employees to adhere to GII in its DEI policies and ways of working ⁶² as the experience of Ursula Doyle shows. Ursula Doyle, a publisher of 30 years' experience, had been employed by Hachette since 2008, and in 2021 she published Kathleen Stock's *Material Girls*. As a result, she too was hounded out of her job, ⁶³ and notes that '*Hachette have done nothing to protect me, and have created a hostile working environment for me and anyone else who shares my views*'. Ursula Doyle's case also highlights how the culture at Hachette had negative impacts on all the women working for them. She notes that:

'Hachette also discriminated against me (and all women working for them) by introducing a trans-inclusion policy which explicitly allows men who say they are women to use women's toilets and shower facilities. I am challenging this policy and hope to show that this is not compliant with the law.'

It is likely that this happened with the explicit approval of Hachette's CEO, David Shelley, who is a strong supporter of Stonewall as reported by *The Bookseller* ⁶⁴ in 2017. *INvolve* considers him something of an LGBT+ inclusion role model ⁶⁵ and reports that he personally ensured that Hachette toilets are gender neutral (i.e. mixed sex).

The presence of Davinia Green as a trustee of The Reading Agency may help to explain the very large investment of the Welsh Government in the *Reading Well* scheme. Davinia Green is a director of Stonewall Cymru and a 'health promotion specialist'. ⁶⁶ As Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group for The Reading Agency, embedding gender identity ideology into its policies and ways of working is very much part of her brief.

⁶⁰ *Hounded: Women, Harms and the Gender Wars*, Jenny Lindsay (11 October 2024).

⁶¹ 'The hounding of a Scottish poet by trans activists', Nick Cohen, *The Spectator* (5 October 2020).

⁶² *Pride Network at Hachette*, Vercida.

⁶³ *Hounded out of my job in publishing*, CrowdJustice page for Ursula Doyle.

⁶⁴ 'David Shelley makes 'top 100 LGBT leaders' list', by Katherine Cowdrey, *The Bookseller* (26 October 2017).

⁶⁵ *David Shelley Role Model page*, INvolve.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.*, The Reading Agency, *Board of Trustees web-page*.

In this, The Reading Agency is aligned with Arts Council England which was found to have discriminated against and harassed Denise Fahmy for her 'gender critical' beliefs.⁶⁷ Apparently for the same reason, Arts Council England have terminated a grant to the LGB Alliance, a group which asserts what it believes to be the '*right of lesbians, bisexuals and gay men to define themselves as same-sex attracted*' which it believes is threatened by '*attempts to introduce confusion between biological sex and the notion of gender*'.

Given the extent to which gender identity ideology is embedded in publishing generally and Hachette in particular, in local Councils, CILIP, and Arts Council England, it is unsurprising to find books promoting this highly contested, counterfactual ideology being enthusiastically offered to children by public libraries.

Three of the books that are included in the *Reading Well for Teens* list in the category *Sexuality, Gender Identity and Mental Health* are highly questionable as to the objectivity, veracity and coherence of their contents. The titles are:

- *Welcome to St. Hell: my trans teen misadventure* by Lewis Hancox;
- *Coming Out Stories* edited by Emma Goswell and Sam Walker;
- *Queer Up* by Alexis Caught



All three of these titles promote gender identity ideology as fact, while *Coming Out Stories* signposts readers to transgender activist organisations including Mermaids and LGBT Youth Scotland. Both of these organisations have promoted puberty blockers for children.⁶⁸ LGBT Youth Scotland has been subject to by claims of child grooming and sexual exploitation,⁶⁹ with its former CEO James Rennie being convicted in 2009 of child sexual assault.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Mermaids⁷¹ provided breast binders to children and appointed paedophile apologist Jacob Breslow as a trustee. Mermaids was recently investigated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales which found it guilty of multiple child safeguarding failures.

⁶⁷ [Press Release: Gender critical beliefs are protected by law. Another victory for women and for common sense](#), didlaw (27 June 2023).

⁶⁸ ['Calls for LGBT youth charity to be banned from schools'](#), David Leask, *The Times* (12 May 2024).

⁶⁹ ['LGBT Youth Scotland refers itself to police over historical grooming claims'](#), Poppy Koronka, *The Times* (26 December 2022).

⁷⁰ ['Children in Need chair resigns over grants to scandal-hit LGBT charity'](#), Steven McIntosh, *BBC News* (21 November 2024).

⁷¹ ['Trans charity Mermaids was mismanaged, regulator says'](#), James Melley, *BBC News* (24 October 2024).

Welcome to St Hell (Lewis Hancox) undermines safeguarding by promoting ‘sex change’ as a solution to the ‘problem’ of being a lesbian, the use of puberty blockers and the sort of extreme dieting that leads to eating disorders. These are clear safeguarding breaches that are highly likely to result in worse outcomes for any teenager who acts upon them.

The Reading Agency resource ⁷² accompanying *Reading Well for Children* directs those needing more help to the Anna Freud Centre, Childline and YoungMinds.

Should a parent or child follow the Anna Freud Centre direction and select their pamphlet with ‘help’ on ‘LGBTQI+’ they will see activist propaganda that presents gender identity ideology uncritically, as well as signposts to Stonewall, The Proud Trust, gendered intelligence, LGBT Youth Scotland, Mindline Trans+ and many other activist organisations that promote contested ideologies surrounding sexuality and ‘gender’.

Childline is another organisation captured by gender identity ideology. ⁷³ It treats the contested metaphysical notion of ‘gender identity’ as empirical fact, as does YoungMinds. ⁷⁴ Visitors to YoungMinds website can find a wealth of information on the use of preferred pronouns and expressing one’s gender, as well as links to organisations including Stonewall and Gendered Intelligence.

Since Hilary Cass published her seminal NHS report in April 2024 ⁷⁵ there is no longer any excuse for an organisation that claims to be credible and compliant with safeguarding guidelines to continue to promote the idea that anyone – especially children and young people – can transition to a different sex.

An organisation like The Reading Agency that is encouraging children to read books that promote the idea that they can change sex, and directing them to activist groups keen to offer them misleading, harmful advice must be challenged about these activities. Instead, Arts Council England continues to fund them with taxpayers’ money, no questions asked.



Fig. 11 – Taunton Library 2024 – the Pride flag and ‘Progress’ flag placed in the children’s section with books promoting gender identity ideology in the display.

⁷² [Reading Well for Children Leaflet](#), The Reading Agency (2025).

⁷³ [Childline page on ‘Gender identity’](#).

⁷⁴ [Young Minds page on ‘Gender identity and mental health’](#).

⁷⁵ [Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people: Final report](#), AKA ‘The Cass Review’ (April 2024).

4 – Do Libraries Have A Future?

Damage Limitation

In a digital world public libraries are increasingly underused and risk becoming irrelevant. Short on money and lacking a clear strategic direction, the promises of individuals and organisations offering funds and increased visitor numbers are welcomed with open arms. The Reading Agency is an example of an organisation that has tapped into the vulnerability of the library service and is using it as a vehicle to sell its products and promote an extreme and unscientific ideology.

Over the past decade a significant amount of time, effort and money has been expended on reports and projects that examine how to turn the fortunes of libraries around. *Libraries Deliver* listed 7 outcomes that would be monitored for success, but so far these improvements have not been achieved. Meanwhile, the same NPOs and IPSOs are repeatedly funded by UK taxpayers despite their many broken promises and their failure to deliver.

5.0 The outcomes libraries deliver for their communities

The public library network can achieve this Vision by focusing on 7 Outcomes:

- cultural and creative enrichment
- increased reading and literacy
- improved digital access and literacy
- helping everyone achieve their full potential
- healthier and happier lives
- greater prosperity
- stronger, more resilient communities

The following section summarises the role of the public library network in supporting each of these Outcomes. Annex 1 contains more detailed information on what each Outcome covers, including:

- the challenges we're responding to
- examples of existing good practice
- what we think success would look like in 2021
- initial ideas on progress indicators

The indicators need more work. We'll establish current baselines, agree specific progress indicators for all 7 Outcomes, and publish them by April 2017. We'll then monitor achievements against these regularly.

Fig. 12 – From *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016–2021*.

Few of these outcomes are measurable, and it would be impossible to measure the contribution made by public libraries to those that are measurable. In any case, the outcome most closely associated with libraries – increased reading and literacy – has not been delivered.

Recommendations

Focus on improving literacy

In the digital age, public libraries are not the only way for citizens to find information. They certainly are not the cheapest way. They are not even the quickest or easiest, much less the preferred way for the vast majority of the population. However, as a gateway to literacy for both adults and children, it could be argued that libraries have a role to play with the provision of sufficient graded reading material and, potentially, classes or tutoring. Internal reforms should be made to libraries across the country which focus solely on the promotion of literacy. As it could be the case that the conversion of libraries into 'community hubs' has led to the ideological activism identified in this report, bringing the explicit mission of libraries back to literacy and broader education would obviate the distraction and detraction which the inclusion of other tangential functions and priorities has engendered.

Commitment to ideological neutrality

The role of libraries as public bodies receiving taxpayers' money is not to promote contested political ideologies to do with sexuality and 'gender', especially when these have clear implications on the safeguarding of children. There should be a clear and binding directive from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport mandating the ideological neutrality of libraries and robust safeguarding measures constructed so that literature promoting such ideologies is not accessible to children, and such literature which is deliberately aimed at children is not included in library collections.

Greater scrutiny of Arts Council England Awards

Arts Council England have sole discretion on the grants that are awarded, and guidelines that require money to be spent properly. But there is little scrutiny of the project outcomes. Where outcomes are self-reported or lack objective measures of success, we cannot know if money has been well spent.

ACE does not have the capacity to regulate and audit the projects it funds, but there must be accountability and a process for inspection. Lack of due process encourages a loss of focus on promised project outcomes whether deliberate or not, and the same organisations are repeatedly promising the same improvements in literacy.

Greater scrutiny of the charity sector

There is a belief that the Charity Commission would not grant charity status to an organisation that should not have it. And once charity status is conferred it is vanishingly rare for it to be withdrawn even if that charity fails to comply with its charitable objectives.

Over time, charities can change their focus and often their personnel. There should be some regular inspection from the Charity Commission to ensure that they continue to align with the aims and activities for which charitable status was granted.

Appendices

Appendix A – NPOs and IPSOs in receipt of ACE funding

The Arts Council annual reports can be found here:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-organisation/annual-reports>

ACE data is available here:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-and-data/our-data>

The full list of grant recipients can be found here:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/how-we-invest-public-money/2023-26-Investment-Programme/2023-26-investment-programme-data>

Applicant Name	(NPO/IPSO/ Transfer)	2018–22 Average Annual Funding (Figure accurate at April 2018)	2022/23 Annual Funding (Extension year)	2023–26 Annual Funding (Offered 4 Nov 2022)	Main Discipline
BookTrust	NPO	£0	£0	£5,763,099	Literature
Culture Squared CIC	NPO	£300,000	£305,520	£1,055,520	Literature
National Centre for Writing	NPO	£498,405	£507,576	£586,582	Literature
Libraries Connected	IPSO (Transfer)	£500,000	£509,200	£509,200	Libraries
Culture, Learning and Libraries (Midlands) – Library Service	NPO	£249,999	£254,599	£504,599	Libraries
The Reading Agency	NPO	£475,394	£484,141	£484,141	Literature
Apples and Snakes	NPO	£455,000	£463,372	£463,372	Literature
New Writing North	NPO	£332,123	£320,412	£428,234	Literature
Arvon Foundation	NPO	£388,267	£395,411	£395,411	Literature
The Poetry Society	NPO	£354,559	£361,083	£361,083	Literature
Kent County Council Libraries	NPO	£0	£0	£285,290	Libraries
Spread the Word	NPO	£197,397	£201,029	£281,029	Literature
Suffolk Libraries	NPO	£176,000	£179,238	£275,172	Libraries

Applicant Name	(NPO/IPSO/ Transfer)	2018–22 Average Annual Funding (Figure accurate at April 2018)	2022/23 Annual Funding (Extension year)	2023–26 Annual Funding (Offered 4 Nov 2022)	Main Discipline
Gloucestershire Libraries & Information	NPO	£0	£0	£250,000	Literature
Wordsmith MCR	NPO	£0	£0	£250,000	Literature
Grimm & Co	NPO	£115,000	£117,116	£247,116	Literature
Libraries Unlimited South West	NPO	£171,959	£175,123	£240,123	Libraries
Lakes Arts Festivals Ltd	NPO	£234,000	£238,306	£238,306	Literature
The Bronte Society	NPO	£232,500	£236,778	£236,778	Literature
St Helens Council Library Service	NPO	£110,000	£112,024	£236,309	Libraries
English PEN	NPO	£229,984	£234,216	£234,216	Literature
Explore York Libraries and Archives Mutual Limited	NPO	£0	£0	£220,000	Libraries
Warwickshire Libraries	NPO	£0	£0	£210,000	Libraries
Bath Spa University Paper Nations	NPO	£0	£0	£201,020	Literature
Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians	IPSO	£0	£0	£200,000	Libraries
Writing East Midlands	NPO	£125,725	£128,038	£198,038	Literature
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	NPO	£0	£0	£195,723	Libraries
Sefton Libraries	NPO	£0	£0	£195,000	Libraries
Writing West Midlands	NPO	£181,044	£184,375	£184,375	Literature
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham	NPO	£180,000	£183,312	£183,312	Libraries
The Reader	NPO	£175,000	£178,220	£178,220	Literature
The Story Museum	NPO	£175,000	£178,220	£178,220	Literature
Community and Cultural Services	NPO	£173,745	£176,942	£176,942	Libraries
Commonword Enterprises Limited	NPO	£94,247	£95,981	£171,854	Literature

Applicant Name	(NPO/IPSO/ Transfer)	2018–22 Average Annual Funding (Figure accurate at April 2018)	2022/23 Annual Funding (Extension year)	2023–26 Annual Funding (Offered 4 Nov 2022)	Main Discipline
East Riding Libraries	NPO	£0	£0	£165,000	Libraries
Inpress Ltd	IPSO	£158,489	£161,405	£161,405	Literature
Peepal Tree Press	NPO	£150,500	£153,269	£153,269	Literature
The Good Agency	NPO	£0	£0	£152,542	Literature
Cinder House Publishing Limited	NPO	£0	£0	£150,000	Literature
Exeter City of Literature	NPO	£0	£0	£150,000	Literature
JACARANDA BOOKS	NPO	£0	£0	£150,000	Literature
Settle Stories	NPO	£0	£0	£150,000	Literature
New Writing South	NPO	£124,192	£126,477	£146,477	Literature
Word Up North Ltd	NPO	£137,424	£139,953	£139,953	Literature
The Writing Squad	NPO	£97,743	£99,541	£131,291	Literature
Nottingham, UNESCO City of Literature	NPO	£0	£0	£130,000	Literature
Poetry Translation Centre Ltd	NPO	£124,575	£126,867	£126,867	Literature
South Tyneside Council	NPO	£0	£0	£125,000	Libraries
Carcanet Press Limited	NPO	£120,696	£122,917	£122,917	Literature
Creative Future Ltd	NPO	£0	£0	£120,000	Literature
London Borough of Merton	NPO	£0	£0	£116,050	Libraries
Bloodaxe Books Ltd	NPO	£92,032	£93,725	£110,000	Literature
CLPE	NPO	£0	£0	£110,000	Literature
Ledbury Poetry Festival	NPO	£53,066	£54,042	£108,042	Literature
The 87 Press LTD	NPO	£0	£0	£100,000	Literature

Applicant Name	(NPO/IPSO/ Transfer)	2018–22 Average Annual Funding (Figure accurate at April 2018)	2022/23 Annual Funding (Extension year)	2023–26 Annual Funding (Offered 4 Nov 2022)	Main Discipline
Comma Press	NPO	£83,160	£84,690	£98,380	Literature
Literature Works	NPO	£96,556	£98,333	£98,333	Literature
Children's Discovery Centre East London	NPO	£93,870	£95,597	£95,597	Literature
The Ministry of Stories	NPO	£89,113	£90,753	£90,753	Literature
Writing Our Legacy	NPO	£0	£0	£80,000	Literature
Manchester Literature Festival	NPO	£76,661	£78,072	£78,072	Literature
Writing on the Wall	NPO	£76,661	£78,072	£78,072	Literature
And Other Stories Publishing CIC	NPO	£74,000	£75,362	£75,362	Literature
The Literary Consultancy	NPO	£73,985	£75,346	£75,346	Literature
Hull Culture and Leisure Library Services	NPO	£0	£0	£75,000	Libraries
George Padmore Institute	NPO	£0	£0	£73,000	Literature
Modern Poetry in Translation	NPO	£50,000	£50,920	£70,920	Literature
Poet in the City	NPO	£67,079	£68,313	£68,313	Literature
The Children's Bookshow	NPO	£67,079	£68,313	£68,313	Literature
Nine Arches Press	NPO	£62,500	£63,650	£63,650	Literature
Wasafiri Ltd	NPO	£59,413	£60,506	£60,506	Literature
PoemsOnTheUnderground	NPO	£52,705	£53,675	£53,675	Literature
ACA Publishing / Sinoist Books	NPO	£0	£0	£50,000	Literature
Dedalus Limited	NPO (Transfer)	£40,000	£40,736	£50,000	Literature
Forward Arts Foundation	NPO	£47,914	£48,796	£50,000	Literature
Index on Censorship	IPSO	£43,122	£43,915	£50,000	Literature
Poetry London	NPO	£47,913	£48,795	£50,000	Literature

Appendices

Appendix B – The Reading Agency Reading Lists

Coloured text indicates that David Shelley, a Trustee of The Reading Agency, is CEO or Director of the publishing house.

Reading Well for Children ⁷⁶

Category	Title	Author	Published by
Healthy Minds	<i>How Not to Lose It: Mental Health – Sorted</i>	Anna Williamson, Sophie Beer	Scholastic
	<i>What's Going on Inside My Head?</i>	Molly Potter, Sarah Jennings	Featherstone
	<i>Health for Life: Self Esteem and Mental Health</i>	Anna Claybourne	Franklin Watts
Feelings	<i>Sometimes I Feel Sad</i>	Tom Alexander	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Exploring Emotions: A Mindfulness Guide to Dealing with Emotions</i>	Paul Christelis, Elisa Pananelli	Franklin Watts
	<i>How are you feeling today?</i>	Molly Potter, Sarah Jennings	Bloomsbury Education
	<i>Feeling Angry!</i>	Katie Douglas, Mike Gordon	Wayland
Worries	<i>Questions and Feelings About: Worries</i>	Paul Christelis, Ximerna Jeria	Franklin Watts
	<i>All Birds Have Anxiety</i>	Kathy Hoopmann	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Me and My Fear</i>	Francesca Sanna	Flying Eye Books
	<i>Ruby's Worry</i>	Tom Percival	Bloomsbury Children's Books
	<i>Outsmarting Worry: An older kid's guide to managing anxiety</i>	Dawn Huebner PhD, Kara McHale	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Worry Angels</i>	Sita Brahmachari	Barrington Stoke
	<i>Gobblechops</i>	Elizabeth Laird	Tiny Owl Publishing Ltd

Category	Title	Author	Published by
The world around you	<i>Dealing with Bullying</i>	Jane Lacey, Venitia Dean	PowerKids Press
	<i>#Goldilocks (A Hashtag Cautionary Tale)</i>	Jeanne Willis, Tony Ross	Andersen Press
	<i>Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide to Coping with Events in the News</i>	Dawn Huebner Phd, Kara McHale	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Ella On the Outside</i>	Cath Howe	Nosy Crow
	<i>Planet Omar: Accident Trouble Magnet: Book 1</i>	Zanib Mian, Nasaya Mafaridik	Hodder Children's Books
Dealing with tough times	<i>The Boy who Built a Wall Around Himself</i>	Kara Simpson, Ali Redford	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Mum's Jumper</i>	Jayde Perkin	Book Island
	<i>Michael Rosen's Sad Book</i>	Michael Rosen, Blake Quentin	Walker Books
	<i>If all the world were ...</i>	Joseph Coelho, Allison Colpoys	Frances Lincoln Children's Books
	<i>Up and Down Mum</i>	Summer Macon	Child's Play (international) Ltd
	<i>The Colour Thief: a family's story of depression</i>	Andrew Fusek Peters, Karin Littlewood, Polly Peters	Wayland
	<i>Clownfish</i>	Alan Durant	Walker Books
When you have a condition	<i>Double Felix</i>	Sally Harris	Brown Dog
	<i>M is for Autism</i>	The students of Limpsfield Grange School, Vicky Martin, Robert Pritchett	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Check Mates</i>	Stewart Foster	Simon and Schuster Children's UK
	<i>Can I tell you about ADHD? A guide for friends, family and professionals</i>	Susan Yarney, Chris Martin	Jessica Kingsley Publishing
	<i>Questions and Feelings About: Autism</i>	Louise Spilsbury	Franklin Watts
	<i>The Illustrated Guide to Dyslexia and its Amazing People</i>	Kate Power, Kathy Iwanczak Forsyth, Richard Rogers	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Questions and Feelings About: Having a Disability</i>	Louise Spilsbury	Franklin Watts

Reading Well for Teens⁷⁷

Category	Title	Author	Published by
Healthy minds	<i>You Can Change the World!: Everyday Teen Heroes Making a Difference Everywhere</i>	Margaret Rooke, Kara McHale, Taylor Richardson, Katie Hodgetts @KTclimate	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
	<i>Be Happy Be You: The teenage guide to boost happiness and resilience</i>	Penny Alexander, Becky Goddard-Hill, Collins Kids	Harper Collins
	<i>One in a Hundred Thousand</i>	Linni Ingemundsen	Usborne
	<i>Be Resilient: How to Build a Strong Teenage Mind for Tough Times</i>	Nicola Morgan	Walker Books
Managing Feelings	<i>The Mental Health and Wellbeing Workout for Teens: Skills and Exercises from ACT and CBT for Healthy Thinking</i>	Paula Nagel, Gary Bainbridge	Jessica Kingsley
	<i>My Intense Emotions Handbook: Manage Your Emotions and Connect Better with Others</i>	Sue Knowles, Bridie Gallagher, Hannah Bromley, Emmeline Pidgen, Kim Golding	Jessica Kingsley
Anxiety and Depression	<i>Depression (A Book About)</i>	Holly Duhig, Danielle Webster-Jones	Booklife Publishing
	<i>Hope</i>	Rhian Ivory	Firefly Press
	<i>My Anxiety Handbook: Getting Back on Track</i>	Sue Knowles, Bridie Gallagher, Phoebe McEwen, Emmeline Pidgen	Jessica Kingsley
	<i>Anxiety is Really Strange</i>	Steve Haines, Sophie Standing	Singing Dragon, Imprint of Jessica Kingsley
Neurodiversity	<i>Frankie's World</i>	Aoife Dooley, Aoife Dooley	Scholastic
	<i>Wired Differently – 30 Neurodivergent People You Should Know</i>	Joe Wells, Tim Stringer	Jessica Kingsley
Body Image	<i>Appearance Anxiety: A Guide to Understanding Body Dysmorphic Disorder for Young People, Families and Professionals</i>	The National and Specialist OCD, BDD and Related Disorders Service	Jessica Kingsley
	<i>Jemima Small Versus the Universe</i>	Tamsin Winter	Usborne
	<i>The Body Image Book for Girls: Love Yourself and Grow Up Fearless</i>	Charlotte Markey	Cambridge UP
	<i>The Year I Didn't Eat</i>	Samuel Pollen	Zunfold
	<i>Being You: The Body Image Book for Boys</i>	Charlotte Markey, Daniel Hart, Douglas Zacher	Cambridge UP

77 Reading Well for Teens, The Reading Agency, 'Healthy Minds' section.

Category	Title	Author	Published by
Understanding Bereavement and Loss	<i>When Shadows Fall</i>	Sita Brahmachari, Natalie Sirett	Little Tiger
	<i>You Will Be Okay: Find Strength, Stay Hopeful and Get to Grips With Grief</i>	Julie Stokes	Wren & Rook
	<i>A Monster Calls</i>	Patrick Ness, Siobhan Dowd	Walker Books
Learning About Life	<i>Booked</i>	Kwame Alexander	Anderson Press
	<i>Stay A Little Longer</i>	Bali Rai	Barrington Stoke
Boost Your Confidence	<i>Social Anxiety Relief for Teens: A Step-by-Step CBT Guide to Feel Confident and Comfortable in Any Situation</i>	Bridget Flynn Walker, PhD, Michael A. Tompkins	Star Spark Press
Surviving Online	<i>Social Media Survival Guide</i>	Holly Bathie, Kate Sutton, Richard Merritt Illustration, The Boy Fitz Hammond, The Boy Fitz Hammond	Usborne
Boost Your Confidence	<i>Welcome to St Hell: My trans teen misadventure</i>	Lewis Hancox	Scholastic
	<i>Coming Out Stories: Personal Experiences of Coming Out from Across the LGBTQ+ Spectrum</i>	Emma Goswell, Sam Walker, Tim Sigsworth MBE	Jessica Kingsley
	<i>Queer Up: An Uplifting Guide to LGBTQ+ Love, Life and Mental Health</i>	Alexis Caught	Walker Books

Reading Well for Dementia ⁷⁸

Title	Author	Published by
<i>Coping with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)</i>	Mary Jordan	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>FAQs on Dementia</i>	Tom Russ, Michael Huddleston	Sheldon Press
<i>What You Really Want to Know About Life with Dementia</i>	Karen Harrison Dening, Hilda Hayo, Christine Reddall	Jessica Kingsley Publisher
<i>Why Dementia Makes Communication Difficult</i>	Alison Wray	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>The Practical Handbook of Living with Dementia</i>	Richard Coaten, Mark Hopfenbeck, Isla Parker	PCCS Books
<i>Slow Puncture: Living Well with Dementia</i>	Peter Berry, Deb Bunt	The Book Guild Ltd
<i>Somebody I Used to Know</i>	Wendy Mitchell	Bloomsbury Publishing

Title	Author	Published by
<i>Take Care, Son: The Story of My Dad and his Dementia</i>	Tony Husband	Robinson
<i>Unforgettable: Rugby, dementia and the fight of my life</i>	Steve Thompson	Bonnier Books
<i>Dementia Essentials</i>	Jan Hall	Vermilion
<i>How to Help Someone with Dementia</i>	Dr Michelle Hamill, Dr Martina McCarthy	Trigger Publishing
<i>United: Caring for our loved ones living with dementia</i>	Gina Awad	Robinson
<i>Intellectual Disabilities and Dementia: A Guide for Families</i>	Karen Watchman	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>Remember Me?</i>	Shobna Gulati	Brazen
<i>The Songaminute Man: How music brought my father home again</i>	Simon McDermott	HQ
<i>My Book about Brains, Change and Dementia</i>	Lynda Moor	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>Elmer and the Gift</i>	David McKee	Andersen Press
<i>The Memory Book</i>	Louise Gooding	Wren & Rook
<i>The Stories Grandma Forgot (and How I Found Them)</i>	Nadine Aisha Jassat	Orion Children's Books

Reading Well for Mental Health⁷⁹

Title	Author	Published by
<i>Introducing Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): A Practical Guide</i>	Elaine Iljon Foreman and Clair Pollard	Icon Books
<i>Overcoming Anger and Irritability, 2nd edition</i>	William Davies	Robinson
<i>Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World</i>	Mark Williams and Danny Penman Piatkus	Robinson
<i>Overcoming Low Self-Esteem, 2nd edition</i>	Melanie Fennell	Robinson
<i>An Introduction to Coping with Grief, 2nd edition</i>	Sue Morris	Robinson
<i>Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness, 2nd edition</i>	Gillian Butler	Robinson
<i>Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death and Surviving</i>	Julia Samuel	Penguin Life

⁷⁹ [Reading Well for Mental Health](#), The Reading Agency.

Losing Our Libraries

Title	Author	Published by
<i>The Sleep Book: How to Sleep Well Every Night</i>	Guy Meadows	Orion
<i>The Essential Guide to Life After Bereavement</i>	Judy Carole Kauffmann and Mary Jordan	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>Stress Control: A Mind, Body, Life Approach to Boosting Your Well-Being</i>	Jim White	Robinson
<i>A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled</i>	Ruby Wax	Penguin Life
<i>Reasons to Stay Alive</i>	Matt Haig	Canongate
<i>A Manual for Heartache</i>	Cathy Rentzenbrink	Picador
<i>I Had a Black Dog</i>	Matthew Johnstone	Robinson
<i>The Recovery Letters</i>	James Withey and Olivia Sagan (eds.)	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>We're All Mad Here: The No-Nonsense Guide to Living with Social Anxiety</i>	Claire Eastham	Jessica Kingsley Publishers
<i>Living with a Black Dog</i>	Matthew Johnstone, Ainsley Johnstone	Robinson
<i>The Boy with the Topknot: A Memoir of Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton</i>	Sathnam Sanghera	Penguin
<i>Living Life to the Full</i>	Chris Williams	Five Areas Limited
<i>The CBT Handbook</i>	Pamela Myles and Roz Shafran	Robinson
<i>Mind Over Mood, 2nd edition</i>	Dennis Greenberger and Christine A. Padesky	Guilford Press
<i>Break Free from OCD: Overcoming Obsessive Compulsive Disorder with CBT</i>	Fiona Challacombe, Victoria Bream Oldfield and Paul M Salkovskis	Vermilion
<i>An Introduction to Coping with Depression, 2nd edition</i>	Lee Brosan and Brenda Hogan	Robinson
<i>Manage Your Mood</i>	David Veale and Rob Willson	Robinson
<i>Overcoming Depression, 3rd edition</i>	Paul Gilbert	Robinson
<i>An Introduction to Coping with Anxiety, 2nd edition</i>	Brenda Hogan and Lee Brosan	Robinson
<i>Overcoming Anxiety, 2nd edition</i>	Helen Kennerley	Robinson
<i>Overcoming Health Anxiety</i>	Rob Willson and David Veale	Robinson
<i>Overcoming Worry and Generalised Anxiety Disorder, 2nd edition</i>	Kevin Meares and Mark Freeston	Robinson

Title	Author	Published by
<i>Overcoming Panic, 2nd edition</i>	Vijaya Manicavasagar and Derrick Silove	Robinson
<i>The Sheldon Short Guide to Phobias and Panic</i>	Kevin Gournay	Sheldon Press
<i>Getting Better Bite by Bite: A Survival Kit for Sufferers of Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating Disorders</i>	Ulrike Schmidt, Janet Treasure and June Alexander	Routledge
<i>Overcoming Binge Eating, 2nd edition</i>	Christopher G. Fairburn	Guilford Press
<i>Body Image Problems & Body Dysmorphic Disorder: The Definitive Treatment and Recovery Approach</i>	Chloe Catchpole, Lauren Callaghan and Annemarie O'Connor	Trigger Press
<i>Overcoming Mood Swings</i>	Jan Scott	Robinson
<i>Defeating Depression: How to Use the People in Your Life to Open the Door to Recovery</i>	Roslyn Law	Robinson
<i>The Compassionate Mind Approach to Postnatal Depression: Using Compassion Focused Therapy to Enhance Mood, Confidence and Bonding</i>	Michelle Cree	Robinson



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