



‘Story Garden’ Evaluation Guidance – For all participating library authorities

Key points

- **Evaluation form for library authorities**
 - **Deadline for submitting your evaluation form: 10 October 2025**
This is essential for our Research and Evaluation team to meet reporting deadlines and circulate your regional and national evaluation summaries. If you anticipate any issues, please get in touch in advance of the deadline.
 - **Format and access:** The evaluation form is in Excel format and can be accessed through The Reading Agency resource bank login. Only one form should be submitted per library authority.
 - **Changes:** The major changes this year include a significantly reduced number of questions, the removal of many open-text boxes and the inclusion of drop-down response options. These changes aim to reduce the time it takes to fill in the form and improve the data outputs. New areas of data collection include questions related to the new Road to Reading offer.
 - **Demographics:** Where possible, data on demographics of Summer Reading Challenge starters and completers should be collected from parents/caregivers for research and reporting purposes. **Demographic data collection is, however, optional and libraries should follow their own local authority regulations on data collection and storage. This includes following guidelines on the type of data collected, protection, privacy, consent, and retention periods.**
- **Family survey**
 - Libraries are encouraged to promote the [survey](#) to families through various means. Over 100 responses per authority will enable us to provide a local results summary.
- **Comment cards**
 - Libraries can continue collecting comments using provided comments cards, sending select quotes (with permission) with the evaluation form for advocacy and publicity.
- **Questions?**
 - Please get in touch ahead of October 2025 if anything in the evaluation documents and guidance is unclear. Email: srcevaluation@readingagency.org.uk

Evaluation form updates

How to access

You will need your login for [The Reading Agency resource bank](#) to access [the evaluation form](#). We have created the evaluation form in Excel so you can keep going back to the form without losing the data you have input already. Some of the questions have been updated for 2025, so please refer to this guidance to familiarise yourself with the requirements.

Deadline

Please submit your evaluation form by email to: srcevaluation@readingagency.org.uk by **10 October 2025**. Send your evaluation form as an Excel spreadsheet and only submit **one form per authority**. We are unable to accept forms submitted as pdfs or Google sheets.

Information on demographic data collection

For research purposes, we would like, where possible, to collect data on the demographics of Summer Reading Challenge starters and completers (Questions 2.4 and 2.6).

Questions on demographics are completely **optional**. Each local authority will have their own rules around data collection, and **libraries will need to follow their local regulations** when signing children up to the Summer Reading Challenge and completing the final evaluation form.

Why do we collect this information?

This type of information is important for us to collect so that we have an understanding of who is taking part in our programmes (and who is not), which allows us to adapt and improve our programmes over time. This can be helpful for libraries at a local and regional level when planning their local offer and it may be of interest to funders who wish to target particular audiences. In addition, data on the ages of participants is used as part of our reporting to Arts Council England.

This type of data is also useful for feeding into national conversations about reading and literacy. For example, research consistently shows that, on both long-term and international levels, boys' reading behaviours and attitudes are lower than those of girls ([Cole et al., 2022](#)), a finding which increases in the UK for boys in receipt of Free School Meals ([Hempel-Jorgensen, et al., 2017](#); [Borgonovi, 2020](#)). Data from 2025 shows, while reading enjoyment is at its lowest levels in 20 years, the drop in enjoyment has been especially steep amongst boys ([Clark, et al., 2025](#)). Girls continue to read daily at higher rates than boys, with the gender gap now at 6.2 percentage points. This also affects children's reading skills: data from the international comparative study Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) shows that girls have a higher average reading achievement than boys and that a higher percentage of girls enjoy reading and are confident in their reading than boys ([PIRLS, 2021](#)). Research also consistently shows differences in reading and writing engagement by age ([Cole et al., 2022](#)) and, for many children, and particularly those in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the pandemic disrupted their education and learning, impacting their reading ([EEF, 2022](#)).

Through our collection of demographic data, we can demonstrate that the Summer Reading Challenge consistently engages more children across age groups and more boys in reading at a higher rate than the national average.

Changes and important elements:

Here is a summary of the changes and important elements to remember for this year:

Section 2: Key Statistics

- Question **2.1** asks you to indicate active local authority run library branches in total that are in your library authority. By active, we mean open library branches that people can access either online or in person.
- Question **2.2** asks you to indicate whether any of your libraries are in areas identified as [‘Priority places’](#) by Arts Council England (ACE), and to list these areas.
- Questions **2.3** to **2.7** refer to Summer Reading Challenge starters and completers who officially registered with your library authority (in person or using physical materials). If participants signed up to the digital Challenge through The Reading Agency website, please **do not** include these in the numbers you provide (as we will be counting these separately).
- Questions **2.4** and **2.6** include options for the number of ‘boys’, ‘girls’, report that they ‘used another term’, ‘information not known’ and ‘preferred not to say’, as well as the number of those within a series of age ranges (0-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12 and older). If you do not collect data on either or both of these categories from some or all your audiences, please enter this under ‘information not known’.
- Questions **2.9** and **2.10** refers to the number of core packs gifted or distributed through other partners such as foodbanks. Please **do not** include the number of core packs distributed to registered participants within this figure.
- For question **2.10**, please log both the number of specific partners you gifted additional core packs to and the number of packs you gifted. For example, if you gifted 100 packs across 10 foodbanks, please log 10 in cell H113, and 100 in cell J113. This is to understand more about partnership reach.

Section 3: Volunteering

- We have reduced the number of questions on volunteering.

Section 4: Theme, materials and other resources

- We have reduced the number of questions on the book collection and theme and removed most of the questions on materials and resources.
- **Question 4.1** asks you to enter the total number of complete sets and/or individual titles you purchased from the Summer Reading Challenge Story Garden book collection across your library authority.
- **Question 4.2** refers to the Story Garden theme. We’d like you to use the dropdown list to select how much you agree or disagree with the sub-questions listed.
- In **Question 4.3**, please explain why you chose the answers above, providing more detail on whether or not the theme was successful in engaging new and returning children and families, what worked well and how this theme may have tied in with your local priorities.

Section 5: Events

- We have reduced the number of questions on the types of events you held.

- **Questions 5.1** now only asks about how many events you ran in total, and **question 5.2** asks how many people (number of children and of adults) attended these events.

Section 6: Delivery and extending reach

- We have reduced the number of questions on your methods of delivery and outreach.
- Question **6.1** asks you to indicate which audiences you may have targeted as part of your delivery.
- Question **6.2** asks about the new Road to Reading offer, which included free resources to help extend reach of summer reading activity to older children and parents/caregivers.
- *If you did not deliver* the Road to Reading this year, please enter 'no' to the first part of the question and skip ahead to Section 7.
- *If you did deliver* the Road to Reading, please indicate how many of the resources you gave away or distributed. Then, we'd like you to use the dropdown list to select how much you agree that older children and young people, family members, and new audiences engaged with the offer, as well as whether you would be keen to be involved in something similar again.
- In **Question 6.3**, please explain why you chose the answers above, providing more detail on whether or not the Road to Reading was successful in engaging older children and families, what worked well and what you would suggest for improving the offer in future.

Section 7: Working with schools

- We have reduced the number of questions on your work with schools.

Section 8: Partnerships

- We have reduced the number of questions on partnerships.
- Question **8.1** asks about your awareness of the Explore Learning workshops offer (for library authorities with a local Explore Learning centre). Please tell us if you have run any workshops with them this year or in the past, and the impact of these events if you hosted any across your libraries.

Section 9: Final comments

- We have split the questions on feedback into two. **Question 9.2** asks you to share what worked well for you this year, and **Question 9.3** asks you to share any suggestions for improvement.

Completing the library evaluation form

To fill in the evaluation form, simply enter the answers in the spaces provided.

- You will only be able to select and edit the cells that require an answer (shaded blue).

- The **wording in red** will help you check your figures as you go and will also signpost you through the form.
- Drop-down options have been provided for all questions that require a 'YES/NO' answer or an 'AGREE/NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE/DISAGREE' answer.
- If a question asks for a number, please only enter numbers in these fields.
- If you are unable to obtain the numbers for a particular question, please leave the answer blank.
- **If you have the number but it is 0, please enter 0 rather than leaving the question blank.**
- Cells containing **#DIV/0!** and totals will be calculated for you.
- You can save your progress at any time by going to File > Save and saving it to a location of your choice.

If you are using the form to collect data from multiple branches:

- Use one copy of the form and send it to each relevant person to fill out their section before they send it to the next person.
- Or send a copy of the form to each person to return to you before you collate all the data into one master form.
- If you circulate the form to colleagues, please ensure you set an internal deadline for its return so you can check through the data before completing your submission to us.

Please submit your evaluation form by email to: srcvaluation@readingagency.org.uk by **10 October 2025**. Send your evaluation form as an Excel spreadsheet and only submit **one form per authority**. We are unable to accept forms submitted as pdfs or Google sheets.

If you have any questions about the evaluation survey or any concerns about the accuracy of your submission, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible!

Family survey

Once again, we will be running an online family survey. Last year the survey received over 1,000 responses and provided evidence about the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge. This year we are running the survey again and would like a higher response so that our results are even more meaningful, helping to increase our understanding of the impact of the Challenge and to collect some wonderful quotes to use for advocacy.

The survey is available at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SummerReadingChallenge2025_Haveyoursay and should be answered by families when they finish their Summer Reading Challenge or at the end of the summer, so they are in a position to reflect on its impact. Participants do not need to have 'completed' the Challenge in order for families to respond to the survey.

The survey will close 30 September 2025. Any family completing the survey will have the option to be entered into a prize draw to win a £30 shopping voucher.

It is easy to access on a smart phone and only takes five minutes. If you would like to see the full list of questions we ask parents/carers, please [contact](#) the Summer Reading Challenge Team.

If you are able to get over **100 responses** to the survey across your library authority, we will provide you with a summary of the results for your area. We are unable to do this with fewer respondent

numbers as the data would not be meaningful, but any survey returns that you are able to generate are really helpful for the UK-wide evaluation report.

Here are some suggestions for how you can promote the survey:

- Talk to families about the survey and encourage them to complete it as they finish the Challenge. It could be completed on a library computer, via a tablet if you have access to them, or on the respondent's own phone.
- Ask Summer Reading Challenge volunteers to encourage people to do the survey.
- Give out the Summer Reading Challenge [comment cards](#), which include a link to the survey.
- Embed the survey on your library's website; there is a guide at the end of this document to assist you.
- Promote the survey via your social media accounts and on RFID screens during the summer. We will create a sticky post on our [Facebook page](#) which links to the survey and encourages families to complete it that you can emulate or share.
- Encourage people to complete the survey when reminding Challenge participants of your local finish date or contacting participants via email.
- Promote the survey in schools' newsletters after the summer.
- Encourage people to complete the survey at celebration events at the end of the Summer Reading Challenge.

Comments cards

Please continue to collect comments using the downloadable comments cards and send a selection of comments with your evaluation form. These comments are invaluable for advocacy and publicity material. Only send us quotes where the permission box has been ticked.

We have updated the adult [comment cards](#) with the family survey link. Welsh-language [comment cards](#) are also available.

Additional Evaluation

If you carry out any extra qualitative or quantitative evaluation within your authority, for example questionnaires for children or internal analysis related to targeted working, please send us a copy of your reports!

For any queries about the evaluation form or process, please [contact](#) the Summer Reading Challenge Team.

QR Code

A promotional resource (next page, page 7) has been created for this year's Family Survey for libraries to print, which includes a link and a QR code. Families can scan this using the cameras on their mobile phones, and this will take them to the family survey.



What did you think about the Summer Reading Challenge?

**Would you like to be in with a chance to win a £30 shopping voucher?
Please tell The Reading Agency about your Story Garden experience by
answering the quick and easy questions in our Family Survey.**

You can access the survey online through this link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SummerReadingChallenge2025_Haveyoursay

Or scan the QR code below and complete the survey on your phone:

