

The National Year of Reading Public Libraries Toolkit

THE
READING
AGENCY

**GO
ALL
IN.**

About the National Year of Reading

The National Year of Reading is a transformative national initiative designed to reignite a culture of reading for pleasure across the UK. It is stewarded by the National Literacy Trust and sponsored by the Department for Education.

The National Year of Reading aims to make reading joyful, relevant, and visible for all – in homes, classrooms, workplaces and communities. More than a year-long campaign, the National Year of Reading 2026 is a catalyst for systems change and a rallying cry for a wide coalition of delivery partners, advocates, and funders.

Key aims and objectives

1. Make reading relevant: Reading is 're-branded' as socially meaningful, culturally visible, and personally valuable
2. Engage new audiences: A universal campaign encouraging everyone in the UK to read more frequently, in more ways; with targeted approaches reaching children, young people and families from disadvantaged communities
3. Transform practice and build infrastructure: the National Year of Reading 2026 creates a legacy – changing reading culture in schools, communities and beyond

Library campaign

The Reading Agency is working with the National Literacy Trust to deliver the public library engagement strand of the National Year of Reading, supporting libraries across the UK to take part in the campaign.

The library campaign's vision is to promote the public library as a vibrant, inclusive and trusted community hub for reading, creativity and connection, bringing its benefits to all, but especially those that need them most.



Key objectives

- Increase profile of the joy, benefits and value of reading and libraries as community connectors:
 - within local authorities
 - with key stakeholder networks
 - with the public
- Utilise the power of public libraries as reading destinations and activation hubs delivering key Go All In messages through ongoing activity and amplifying key moments
- Convene local and national partnerships and stakeholder networks connecting the dots between reading in communities, schools and families

The Reading Agency is working with library sector partners, including Libraries Connected, Libraries Rising, CILIP and the British Library, and national partners including SLIC and Welsh Government to develop and deliver the library campaign.

[Find out more](#) about activating the National Year of Reading in public libraries.



Key Calendar Moments

Throughout the National Year of Reading, there will be key moments activated by the campaign. These moments will be a focus of activity and promotion, and libraries are encouraged to use them for your own activity, community partnerships and to promote the National Year of Reading.

The National Year of Reading moments are split into two types:

- **Tentpole** – nationally significant moments that anchor the campaign across the year and will involve all partners, shown in purple below
- **Drumbeat** – frequent activity across the year that will be more localised and partner-led, shown in red below

In addition, we have included other significant dates that your library may want to get involved in. This list is not exhaustive, and aims to provide you with a menu of options for participation. You do not need to celebrate all of them to take part in the National Year of Reading.

Click the links to find out about some of the dates, and further information about many of these moments (including how to activate them, and comms assets) will be shared with [The Reading Agency's National Year of Reading Public Library bulletin](#). Please ensure that you are signed up to this list.

For more calendar moments, please refer to [Libraries Connected Universal Library Offers calendar](#).



January

- National Year of Reading launch
- 19–25 January: Health Information Week

February

- LGBT+ History Month
- 31 January–8 February: National Storytelling Week
- 9–15 February: Children's Mental Health Week

March

- Launch of BookTrust's 'Share your Story'
- 5 March: World Book Day
- 6–15 March: British Science Week
- 8 March: International Women's Day

April

- BookTrust Storytime Prize announced
- 23 April: World Book Night

May

- Share a Story month
- Local and Community History Month
- Reading Rights 'in conversation with' event, hosted by Frank Cottrell-Boyce with BookTrust
- 11–17 May: Mental Health Awareness Week

June

- Pride Month
- National Crime Reading Month
- Libraries Week
- 1–7 June: Volunteer Week
- 11 June: Empathy Day
- 20 June: Summer Reading Challenge launch in Scotland

July

- Disability Pride month
- 4 July: Summer Reading Challenge launch in England and Wales (Super Sign Up Saturday)
- Summer of Reading and Sport

August

- Summer Reading Challenge
- Summer of Reading and Sport

September

- Back to school
- Rollout of Bookstart programmes
- 8 September: International Literacy Day
- National Book Club Day

October

- Take 10 to Read, World Mental Health Day for Wellbeing
- Black History Month
- BookTrust Story Sharer Week
- 1 October: National Poetry Day
- 10 October: World Mental Health Day
- Green Libraries Week

November

- Mass participation event (for schools and families, details to be announced)

December

- Christmas
- Winter Mini Challenge launch

**GO
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Go All In

'Go All In' is the campaign brand for the National Year of Reading and it reimagines what reading means today. Central to the campaign is the proposition "if you're into it, read into it", which positions reading as a powerful plug-in to the thing you already love. Leaning into behavioural change theory, it focuses on appeal, not duty, and highlights the immediate rewards of reading, rather than the well-known long-term benefits.

For the National Year of Reading 2026, we're bringing reading to where culture is. Positioning reading, in all its forms, as a way of going deeper into your passions than ever before.

"Go All In" is a bold invitation wrapped up in a compelling and contemporary visual identity. At the heart of this identity is the **open book**—a visual device that brings this idea of life. It's a symbol of depth and discovery, and a call to action, whether your passion is music, baking, family time, films, sci-fi or travel...

Get ready, because in 2026 we're going to Go All In.

What does this mean in libraries?

You can encourage your audiences—adults and children—to go all in at your library. This means tapping into people's interests and passions, showing them how the library offer can support their interests.

In many ways, you're probably already doing this! Your book stock and regular programming already tap into interests and passions, from Rhyme Time, to Knit and Natter, and from gardening books to manga collections.

You can use the Go All In branding to badge your programming and activities throughout the year, including on existing and ongoing activity.



Comms

We have created a suite of editable digital templates for Go All In, which you can use to support the campaign, including posters, email signatures, newsletter banners and social media assets. Please see the [Go All In Library Assets and Messaging](#) document to view the designs and guidance on messaging. You can download the templates [here](#). For advice on how to edit the templates please see page 51 of the [Go All In full brand toolkit](#) where you can also find the campaign logos to download.

Click [here](#) for all the resources available to libraries during the National Year of Reading.

If you have any questions about these templates and the branding contact campaigns@readingagency.org.uk.

Suggested social media copy

Please use **#GoAllIn2026** and **#NationalYearOfReading2026** on your posts.

Instagram: @go_all_in_2026

Website: <https://www.goallin.org.uk/>

- This year is the **#NationalYearOfReading2026** and your passions make the perfect reading playlist. Love music? Baking? Sport? Sci-fi? It's all waiting for you at your local library; find it and enjoy! **#GoAllIn2026**
- Libraries bring people together. Whether it's through stories, events, or friendly faces, your library is ready to help you read more of what you love. Celebrate reading with us and Go all in this **#NationalYearOfReading2026**. **#GoAllIn2026**
- New to the library or thinking about joining? The **#NationalYearOfReading2026** is the perfect time to step inside. Get lost in books, find an audiobook for your commute, be part of your community at free events and find something that makes you smile. **#GoAllIn2026**



Suggested newsletter/website copy

The National Year of Reading 2026 is all about inspiring people to read more. Whatever your passion, [library name] has something for it. If you visit for the café, to use a computer or to find a quiet space, why not explore our shelves too? Membership is free and we have books, magazines and e-lending for every age and interest.

Never been to the library before? This is the perfect time to discover what is waiting for you. From early years storytimes to activities for teens and families, our library is a friendly community space for reading, creativity and connection. You can also Go All In from home by trying our e-books, audiobooks and digital magazines. Explore, discover and read into what you love at your library.



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Get involved in your libraries

Activity ideas

The National Year of Reading aims to promote and amplify existing activity happening across the country.

Think about how you can encourage people to **discover your library** and everything it has to offer, with a focus on reading.

As you plan for 2026, think about the following:

- How can you inspire your customers who come in to use the café, or computers, to borrow a book?
- How can you reach someone who has never visited the library before, and doesn't know what is available for them?
- Who can you work with to reach new audiences, in particular the campaign target audiences (early years, boys 10-16, disadvantaged families)?
- What elements of your offer can you highlight that people may not know about? This can be anything from your e-lending platforms to your range of activities, the fact that membership is free, and that you have stock for all ages and interests.
- Consider different entry points; accessing an e-lending platform from home may be the first way that someone engages with the library
- How can people **Go All In** at the local library?



Displays

Promotional materials are available to help you create displays for the National Year of Reading. You can use these materials throughout the year for general promotion, or to create displays that encourage audiences to Go All In on topics such as gardening, fashion, video games and so much more.

Simple Stock Display Ideas

- Create 'grab and go' book displays near entrances or self-service machines with accessible collections (e.g., "30-minute reads", "Books under 200 pages", "If you liked X..., try Z..."). If you stock them, this is a great place to highlight Quick Reads as options to encourage people to get into reading
- Borrow a staff pick: create mystery 'wrapped' books chosen by staff or volunteers for the National Year of Reading with a short endorsement and to encourage people to try something new!
- Hidden Gems: create a rotating display of under-borrowed books and resources (local archives, language learning, manga etc.) inviting visitors to 'Go All In' on a new topic each month

Library authorities in England will receive printed materials via a central point in their authority. The design files are available if you would like to print additional materials locally. Please contact campaigns@readingagency.org.uk for more information.

Activities and events

Library calendars are full of exciting events for all ages and interests. You can:

- Link your regular groups, such as Rhyme Time or Knit and Natter, to the National Year of Reading
- Engage your book clubs; can you start a new group with a different angle that might reach new audiences? Make sure your book clubs are updated on the [Book Club Hub](#) and you're signed up to hear the latest news and opportunities for book clubs of all ages
- Publishers will be looking for opportunities for their authors with new books coming out in 2026. Speak to The Reading Agency for support in finding authors to visit your libraries
- **Go All In** on events and activities that will appeal to different interests and hobbies. These can be for children, teenagers or adults, or aimed at families, and you can work with partners to reach new audiences. Topics can include sports, music, food, films, gardening, crafts, fashion, video games...the list is endless!
- Reading and Skills workshops: cookbook-led recipe demos, gardening masterclasses or hobby sessions
- For 10-16 year olds, you can run events and create displays connecting video games to related books. For example, for fantasy RPGs,(fantasy/post-apocalyptic RPG), create a display of books that match their mood and themes of dystopian fiction, adventure, moral choices



Outreach

The National Year of Reading aims to engage new audiences with reading. In your activity over the year, think about how you can reach someone who has never used their local library. This could be through promotion of the core library offer, or specific, targeted activity.

- Work with local schools to link up to the schools offer for National Year of Reading and create a journey for young readers
- Partner with local charities and community organisations, such as adult learning services or food banks, to reach new audiences
- **Go All In** at locations that link to interests: cinema, sports clubs, soft play or play groups, shopping centres, supermarkets, garden centres, music venues, local museums. For family engagement, consider local attractions such as escape rooms, farms or tourist venues. Can you have a presence there at their busy times, or work with them to build new partnerships to promote the library through their digital and/or in-person comms?
- Local hobby shops such as for crafts, games (e.g. board games, Warhammer, Dungeons & Dragons) may have potential for partnership
- Speak to your local GP surgery about providing slides for screens in their waiting rooms, or posters for their noticeboards. You can highlight particular stock or activity e.g. for new parents
- Many local colleges also have screens. Provide them with slides that show how the library can help them to **Go All In**
- Work with your local public transport providers about how the library service can reach people at bus or train stations
- Get involved in cultural events taking place in your locality. Host a stall at local events, markets or festivals to sign up new members and promote the library. Take banners or leaflets out with you to support promotion
- Ask your partners to support digital promotion by sharing the branded assets with them and creating partner posts on social media
- Use local platforms such as Facebook groups or Nextdoor to get your message out and reach new audiences
- Work with local media to promote your activity, especially around the key calendar moments



Key Research

Target audiences

The National Year of Reading is for **everyone**, but three priority audiences have been identified as having the greatest need and opportunity for intervention:

- **Parents of 0–5s**
- **Boys aged 10–16**
- **Disadvantaged families**

Reading in the UK is in crisis. Only 1 in 3 children and young people say they enjoy reading, with participation in daily reading falling to under 21%. The decline is sharpest among boys, teenagers, and low-income families.

Yet reading for pleasure is consistently linked to positive educational, social and economic outcomes.

Children and teenagers

- One in four children hasn't reached the expected level of reading by the age of 11.¹
- 20% of 15-year-olds in England and Scotland, 22% in Northern Ireland and 29% in Wales do not have a minimum level of literacy proficiency.²
- Only 29% of 10-year-olds in England report that they like reading 'very much', compared to an international average of 46%.³
- Reading for pleasure early in childhood is linked to better cognitive performance and mental wellbeing in adolescence.⁴
- Reading for pleasure is more important for children's cognitive development than their parents' level of education and is a more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background.⁵
- 16-year-olds who choose to read books for pleasure outside of school are more likely to secure managerial or professional jobs in later life.⁶

1 DfE (2024) [Key stage 2 attainment, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

2 PISA (2022) [Programme for International Student Assessment \(PISA\): Results from PISA 2022](#)

3 National Literacy Trust (2025) [Children and young people's reading in 2025 | National Literacy Trust](#); PISA (2022) [PISA 2022: national report for England](#) p.163

4 Yun-Jun Sun & Barara J. Sahakian et al. (2023) [Early-initiated childhood reading for pleasure: associations with better cognitive performance, mental well-being and brain structure in young adolescence | Psychological Medicine | Cambridge Core](#)

5 Sullivan and Brown (2013) [Social inequalities in cognitive scores at age 16: The role of reading](#)

6 Taylor (2011) [Reading at 16 linked to better job prospects](#)



Adults

- In England, 1 in 2 adults don't regularly read.⁷
- Around 8.7 million people (18% of adults) in England score at the lowest level of proficiency in literacy (at or below Level 1).
- 34% of readers say that reading had improved their concentration levels.⁸
- Studies have found that reading for pleasure enhances empathy, understanding of the self, and the ability to understand one's own and others' identities.⁹
- Regular readers report **15%** higher average levels of life satisfaction, compared to lapsed or non-readers.¹⁰
- 44% of regular readers said reading had improved their mental health and wellbeing, compared with 23% of lapsed and non-readers.¹¹



For more facts about reading, see [The Reading Agency reading facts page on our website](#).

A market research report commissioned for the National Year of Reading will be available in early 2026. Please ensure that you are subscribed to [The Reading Agency's National Year of Reading Public Library bulletin](#) to receive the latest information.



- 7 Wheeler et al. (2024) [Survey of Adult Skills 2023 \(PIAAC\): national report for England](#); estimated number of adults calculated from [Population estimates for England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (2024, England males & females, 18 and over)
- 8 The Reading Agency (2024) [The State of the Nation's Adult Reading: 2024 Report](#)
- 9 Billington, J. (2015) [Reading between the Lines: the Benefits of Reading for Pleasure](#)
- 10 The Reading Agency (2024) [The State of the Nation's Adult Reading: 2024 Report](#)
- 11 The Reading Agency (2024) [The State of the Nation's Adult Reading: 2024 Report](#)



Library use and access

Research carried out by IPSOS for the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS)¹² finds that two-thirds of UK adults (66%) have not used a library in the past year, with recent decades showing concerning decline in library engagement across England.

Key barriers to increased library use are wide ranging, and whilst accessibility is crucial, research finds that limited awareness of services/activities, time constraints, social identity concerns, personal relevance, and availability of alternatives are all potent barriers to engagement.

A variety of factors shape public library engagement and the report identified ways in which engagement could be encouraged:

1. Limited awareness of the full range of services and activities that libraries offer. Raising awareness (both on and offline) of the breadth of the library offer and giving people a reason to visit will be central to encouraging library use.

58% of library non-users indicated they are unfamiliar with library services beyond borrowing physical books

2. Convenience of library services and comfort of the library space are important. People have concerns about opening hours (especially for parents and full-time workers), parking, and accessibility of library spaces. Some have negative previous experiences that left them feeling libraries were 'dated', 'noisy' or 'too quiet' depending on their preferences. Positive experiences often involved staff who were friendly and shared extensive literary knowledge. Considering key factors that make library engagement convenient and welcoming will be an important part of supporting people in feeling able to use libraries. This could include reviewing or making clear to people opening times, the online offer, parking facilities, accessibility and clarifying the types of spaces available in libraries.

¹² IPSOS (2024) [Barriers to library use - qualitative research report](#), DCMS; IPSOS (2025) [What works to engage library non-users](#); DCMS



3. Whilst considered an important community resource, libraries are not always personally appealing. People see the values of libraries for the local community, but the services people associate with libraries don't always hold a personal appeal. Building library appeal could involve the promotion of services, targeting these to specific groups who are likely to benefit and making clear how or why they are convenient for the user.

Many non-users struggle to see how libraries fit into their modern lives, perceiving them as irrelevant in the digital age. This finding is more prevalent among men and those confident in using the internet.

Interventions to consider during the National Year of Reading

Based on these findings, and workshops conducted by Ipsos with frontline library staff the report suggests three interventions for libraries to consider:

1. Widening library reach through strategic social media engagement:

This involves going beyond simply promoting existing library-specific social media channels and actively engaging with non-users on platforms they already frequent. This could include partnering with relevant organisations, participating in online communities, and creating content tailored to specific audience segments. The goal is to increase awareness of the library's diverse offerings and challenge outdated perceptions.

2. Transforming libraries into vibrant community hubs by hosting partner services:

By hosting services beyond typical library offerings, such as health clinics, early years programmes, or job fairs, this intervention seeks to increase library visibility and attract new audiences. This strategy also aims to help address the perception that library use is inconvenient by providing the opportunity for individuals to engage in multiple activities during a single visit.

3. Reframing the library's value proposition to build resonance with non-users:

This requires developing targeted messaging that emphasises the library's relevance in the digital age, highlighting benefits such as sustainability, cost savings, and community connection. By tailoring messaging to the values and priorities of different segments, libraries can demonstrate their personal relevance and encourage re-engagement.

For more information about barriers to library engagement, see the [DCMS Barriers to library use report](#), '[Rediscovering libraries: new insights on engaging non-users](#)', and '[What works to engage library non-users](#)'.



Further information

If you have any questions about participating in the National Year of Reading in your library, please contact campaigns@readingagency.org.uk.

Make sure you're signed up to our [National Year of Reading Public Library bulletin](#) to hear the latest updates and opportunities.

Click [here](#) for all the resources available to libraries during the National Year of Reading.

Check out the Libraries page of the Go All In Website and find out more about the campaign: <https://goallin.org.uk/get-involved/libraries/>

Other organisations you work with (e.g. schools, charities, community organisations) can sign up for updates from the National Year of Reading: <https://www.goallin.org.uk/register>

The National Year of Reading 2026 is a Department for Education initiative in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust to address the steep decline in reading enjoyment among children, young people and adults. The year-long collective action campaign aims to motivate people everywhere to see reading as modern, social, and personally meaningful to boost skills, empathy and benefit wellbeing. Shaped by behaviour change insight, the campaign identity, Go All In, is an invitation for the nation to reimagine reading as the ultimate tool to go deeper into the things they already love.

For more information, visit www.goallin.org.uk

About The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is a UK charity that inspires social and personal change through the proven power of reading. We work with individuals of all ages, communities and trusted partners to share the transformative benefits of reading for happy, healthy and thriving lives. The Reading Agency reaches over two million people a year but with a UK population of over 67 million that's not nearly enough. We want to get more people fired up about reading because everything changes when you read.

Get in touch today to find out more about what we do and to help us on our mission.

www.readingagency.org.uk

@readingagency

About the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity that empowers children, young people and adults with the literacy skills they need to succeed. Reading, writing, speaking and listening skills give you the tools to get the most out of life, and the power to shape your future. For over 30 years the National Literacy Trust has continued to support schools, families and communities on a local and national level to help people change their stories.

literacytrust.org.uk

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