

Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2020

Supporting documents



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Engage our employees in the literacy challenge

Support the drive to raise literacy levels in our local community

Contribute to the national campaign to raise literacy levels

Background information

What is it?

- The Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2020 is the fifth year of a cross-sector initiative to encourage business support for driving up literacy levels in the UK.
- 79 businesses have signed up to the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2020.
- Developed by the National Literacy Forum (19 literacy and child poverty charities), the Pledge provides a framework for business action in the literacy space.
- It builds on the Vision for Literacy – a policy document of the National Literacy Forum released in October 2014 with cross-party commitment to tackle the UK's literacy crisis. The Vision for Literacy recommended four areas or *Pathways to Literacy*, where sustained policy action is required. From action in the early years to encouraging links between schools and employers, the document called on all of society to play its part in raising literacy levels.

What's new for 2020?

- 86% of constituencies in England contain at least one ward at risk of serious literacy problems. This requires local and coordinated solutions¹. The effect of Brexit on the UK makes this local approach more important than ever.
- In 2020, we will have a focus on the localised nature of the literacy challenge, and what businesses can do within their local communities to improve literacy levels. We can provide businesses with access to data from Experian that will show where to target support locally and help shape activity to support those that need it the most.

Why is literacy important to business?

- Read On. Get On. estimated that if every child left primary school with the reading skills they need, our economy could be more than £32.1 billion bigger by 2025.
- Businesses are also concerned about young people's basic skills, with nearly a third of employers saying that are not satisfied with young people's literacy and use of English.
- The effect of Brexit on the UK makes this more important than ever. As the UK prepares to leave the European Union, these skills will become more important as we forge new economic alliances in a competitive global market.

Benefits include:

- Alignment with other corporate signatories to demonstrate partnership working and maximise impact
- The inclusion of your logo on the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge document that will be disseminated to key policy contacts and hosted on the National Literacy Trust website and voluntary sector partners' websites
- Brand alignment with leading voluntary sector organisations increasing your CSR profile
- Mentions in communications showcasing your work to fulfil the pledge
- Access to high quality support materials with tips and advice on how to fulfil the pledge
- A dedicated contact person at the National Literacy Trust who can answer your queries

What am I committing to do?

We are asking businesses to take at least one action (commensurate with size) in each of the following areas:

- Engaging employees in the literacy challenge
- Supporting the drive to raise literacy levels in your local community

¹ <https://literacytrust.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/all-party-parliamentary-group-literacy/literacy-score-mapping-literacy-need-across-england/>

- Contributing to the national campaign to raise literacy levels

These are intended to inspire, rather than be prescriptive, so please do feel free to innovate and remember that even small steps can have a big impact. If you would like some help deciding what action to take, get in touch.

What support will there be?

- The supporting documents have a range of examples of action you could take in each area.
- You will also have a dedicated contact at the National Literacy Trust who will be on hand to help.
- We can provide you with access to data from Experian to help focus your activity.

What's the time frame for activity?

- You are signing up for 1 year, with activity running from January-December 2020.

For further information please email businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk or call Tessa Tyler Todd on 020 7820 5852.

Business can play a vital part in helping raise literacy levels, increasing our economic competitiveness and leading to a fairer society. Join the national literacy campaign today!

How to fulfil the pledge?

Below are some examples of how your business could fulfil the *Vision for Literacy Business Pledge*. The examples are intended to inspire, rather than be prescriptive. Your current activity might well already fulfil some of the pledges. If you would like to join the national literacy campaign to help drive up literacy levels but are not currently taking any action in this area, we can help you identify small steps that could have a big impact. Please contact businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk for more information.

PLEDGE	WHAT TYPE OF THINGS CAN YOU DO?
Engage our employees in the literacy challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a communal book space for staff to read and share books <input type="checkbox"/> Start a book club to share your favourite books and promote reading for enjoyment <input type="checkbox"/> Share tips and resources for parents to help develop their child’s literacy and communication skills on your intranet and/or staff notice boards. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop the literacy skills of your employees. <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have any employees who have recently returned from maternity/paternity leave, become grandparents or recently retired? They are likely to have a particular interest in and awareness of local literacy provision, so you could ask them to map it to help you identify the most effective action. <input type="checkbox"/> Innovate – consult with your employees to identify the best action to take.
Support the drive to raise literacy levels in our local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Get staff volunteering in literacy-focussed activities in schools, libraries and community setting, e.g. reading helpers etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Working with local schools, libraries and partners like the Schools Library Service https://schoolslibraryservicesuk.org/your-nearest-sls/ <input type="checkbox"/> Run or host literacy events in your office/shop. <input type="checkbox"/> Inspire disadvantaged young people in your area by providing targeted work experience opportunities from school visits to work-placed experiences to highlight the importance of literacy and communication skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Gift free books to children and families who might not be able to afford their own. <input type="checkbox"/> Embed literacy development opportunities and reading for pleasure within your current community outreach activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Embed early literacy resources in product design to support improved literacy outcomes through nudge activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Promote fundraising opportunities for staff to raise money for literacy charities. <input type="checkbox"/> Providing bursaries for local teachers to attend training is a great way of upskilling tomorrow’s workforce. Contact Emily.best@literacytrust.org.uk to see how you can support teachers in your area.
Contribute to the national campaign to raise literacy levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Raise awareness of the great work you are doing in this area by providing case studies on your activity to contribute to the evidence and messaging around the importance of language, literacy and reading for pleasure. See the Feedback Form or send us your stories any time by emailing businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk. <input type="checkbox"/> Share the latest research and messaging through your communication channels to a range of audiences, including the public, clients, and policy makers. Let us know who to send this information to by emailing businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk. <input type="checkbox"/> Build the research base by commissioning new research on language and literacy development. <input type="checkbox"/> Spread the word about the literacy challenge and our work to tackle it to your policy contacts. For key messages, email businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk. <input type="checkbox"/> Use all appropriate networks (e.g. clients, suppliers, charity partners) to raise awareness of and build support to tackle the literacy challenge.

Useful links

Localised focus of the literacy challenge

[Experian Literacy Score](#)

Provides information on constituencies with the greatest area of literacy need.

[National Literacy Trust hubs](#)

A guide to the National Literacy Trust hubs and how as a business you can get involved.

Early years language and literacy

[Words for Life](#)

Provides information on development milestone and tips and resources to help develop language and communication skills from 0-11 years.

[Small Talk](#)

Helps parents turn the activities they are already doing with their child every day into new opportunities to build their child's language skills.

[Hungry Little Minds](#)

Resources that help encourage parents to engage in activities that support their child's early learning

[What to expect, when? A parents' guide](#)

Booklet for parents/carers to find out more about how your child is learning and developing during their first five years, in relation to the EYFS. Developed by DfE and 4Children.

[Talking Point](#)

Information for parents and practitioners on how to support their children's speech, language and communication needs.

[Literacy Apps](#)

A handy guide for parents with tips to on how to get the most of apps that help young children learn language and communication skills.

[Universally Speaking](#)

Provides information to support parents and practitioners to understand typical speech, language and communication development.

[Ready for Reading and Writing Pack](#)

Do you know what phonics is? Do you know your grapheme from your phoneme? If you want to find out what your child is learning then this pack is for you.

[Parents Top Ten Tips](#)

Ten practical top tips on getting your children into reading.

Free activities and games for children

[Listen up – it's not just talking](#)

A downloadable resource pack of activities and games to encourage listening, understanding, interaction and play.

[Words for Life activity sheets](#)

Spending time playing, drawing and talking with your child is a great way of helping them learn. Download activity sheets for children from 0-11.

[I Spy a Picture Book from Words for Life](#)

Free activity booklet for families, containing fun, simple activities and ideas to help your child develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills ready for school.

[CBeebies Magazine Big Reading Adventure Activities](#)

Stories and activities from popular shows will boost your child's literacy skills.

[Storytelling games, activities and ideas from Bookstart](#)

A collection of activities to support storytelling sessions including listening and attention games and pictures to help your child tell their very own story.

[Bookstart for families](#)

Every child in England and Wales is entitled to a free Bookstart pack before they are 12 months old and again aged 3-4 years (27 months in Wales).

[Summer Reading Challenge](#)

Sign up at your local library for free during the summer. Children can log books they've read, find new books, take part in competitions and play games.

[Communication Leaders](#)

A peer mentoring approach to supporting language, communication and confidence for primary and secondary school pupils.

Book recommendations

Stuck for what to read next with your children? Check out a few great selections and suggestions:

[BookTrust best book guide](#)

The best books from the past two years grouped into different age categories.

[BookTrust's books for bedtime](#)

With bold illustrations and lots of opportunities for children to join in, these books are perfect for bedtime reading with your child.

[BookTrust best book finders](#)

Tools that you let you find your perfect book for you and your child by selecting age and category.

[Book Sorter from the Summer Reading Challenge](#)

A fun tool for kids to find the perfect book for them, recommended by other children. Available all year round.

[Words for Life baby to 3 books](#) and [3-5 books](#)

Top recommendations from Words for Life for children aged 0 – 3 and 3 – 5.

Adult literacy

[The Reading Agency](#)

Provides a number of free resources to help improve adult reading skills.

[Learn Direct](#)

Provides online courses and a network of learning centres.

[Read Easy](#)

Recruits, trains and supports volunteers to give one-to-one tuition to adults who struggle with reading.

Case studies

These case studies are examples of activity undertaken by signatories of the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2019.

Engage our employees in the literacy challenge

The Literacy Project - volunteering



[The Literacy Project](#) is run by The Publishers Association and aims to match the unique assets of the publishing industry – people, authors and books – with localised initiatives and organisations to raise literacy levels through targeted and concentrated action. The mission is to drive up low levels of literacy and social mobility in the UK's poorest communities.

Last year they supported in a number of ways including:

- In Glasgow, employees from HarperCollins UK's local distribution centre volunteered on the [Early Words Together](#) programme, which has given disadvantaged parents in the city the skills and confidence to support their child's language development at home.
- HarperCollins UK has also committing to improve the communication and employability skills of young people in Stoke-on-Trent. They are sponsoring the [Words for Work](#) employability programme in the area and donating books to local secondary school libraries, and best-selling author Mel Sherratt, who lives in Stoke-on-Trent, has been secured as an ambassador for the campaign to help raise students' aspirations.

Support the drive to raise literacy levels in our local community

British Land – Young Readers Programme



Last year, the partnership between British Land and the National Literacy Trust reached 8,234 children and trained 107 teachers. They also distributed over 24,700 free books and ran around 84 events across British Land places.

This longstanding partnership aims to promote reading for enjoyment in the schools and local areas in which British Land sites are situated, and to improve social mobility in areas of disadvantage.

Since the launch of this award-winning partnership in 2011, the British Land Young Readers Programme has been embedded in over 400 schools situated in deprived communities and has reached over 42,000 high-need children. Within these schools, the programme is continuing to foster a culture of reading for enjoyment and is giving children the chance to choose and take home books they otherwise wouldn't be able to.

The Literacy Project – Community

The Literacy Project also supported a number of initiatives to support literacy levels in communities. This included:

- In Nottingham, Scallywag Press illustrator Rose Robbins helped the National Literacy Trust design A5 flyers for their Christmas book gifting campaign, encouraging parents to read and chat together with their young child

- In the North East, Penguin Random House provided the National Literacy Trust with funding, books and intellectual property – including the iconic Peppa Pig and Spot the Dog – to help get key literacy messages out to parents who are traditionally hard to reach.
- Penguin Random House, has also worked together with the National Literacy Trust to launch a new pilot programme, [Puffin World of Stories](#), which gives primary schools in deprived parts of the North East, London and Essex the books, materials, training and resources they need to champion reading for pleasure across the whole school and reinvigorate their school libraries.



Contribute to the national campaign to raise literacy levels

McDonald's - Reaching families through the McDonald's Happy Readers partnership



The National Literacy Trust has worked in partnership with McDonald's since 2013 as part of McDonald's Happy Readers campaign, which strives to increase book ownership and make reading fun for kids.

Last year, McDonald's funded the inaugural annual literacy survey of children aged 5-8, which revealed that almost 1 in 5 children in this age group do not have a book of their own at home.

Last year was also the sixth [Happy Readers campaign](#), which supports families reading together by giving away free books in every Happy Meal™ over five weeks.