

**\*\*Press release – strictly embargoed until 00:01 Monday 7 June 2021\*\***

**The Reading Agency announces Summer of Reading initiative, in collaboration with over twenty organisations across library, publishing and education sectors**



- **Over twenty organisations to partner to provide a shared programme of free events and resources to encourage reading for pleasure over the summer**
- **The shared programme of activity will aim to embed the value of reading, support catch up learning, promote wellbeing, and build social connections as part of the UK's Covid recovery**
- **Campaign to launch on 14 June and run throughout the summer to 17 September**

**7 June, 2021:** National charity The Reading Agency have today announced a cross-sector initiative partnering with over twenty organisations to encourage children's reading and learning over the summer and support families, teachers and librarians with free resources and events. The Summer of Reading initiative will launch on 14 June, with organisations working together on a shared programme of activity, aiming to reach as many families and children as possible.

Organisations taking part in the Summer of Reading include: [Arts Council England](#), [ASCEL](#), [Authors Aloud](#), [Book Clubs in Schools](#), [BookTrust](#), [Bookmark](#), [the Department for Culture, Media & Sport](#), [Calibre Audio](#), [CILIP](#), [Coram Beanstalk](#), [Libraries Connected](#), [National Literacy Trust](#), [Open University](#), [Peters](#), [Pop Up Projects](#), [Read for Good](#), [SLA](#), [The British Library](#), [The Reader](#), [The Reading Agency](#) and [World Book Day](#).

Throughout the summer, families will be encouraged to share their reading activity on social media with the hashtag **#SummerOfReading**. The extensive programme of activity will be available from 14 June, with new events and resources being announced every week, through to 17 September - including both digital activity and in-person events at libraries as they re-open. Confirmed events so far include Pop Up Project's livestreamed showcase and their *10 Stories to Make a Difference* launch at the British Library, as well as the launch of The Reading Agency's 2021 Summer Reading Challenge with WWF and the Teacher's Reading Challenge in partnership with the OU, to give teachers and librarians access to a wide range of reading for pleasure content for children and young people.

The initiative has been coordinated as part of a collaborative effort to help ensure that children who need the benefits of reading most have access to summer reading activity as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to be felt acutely by children, parents and carers<sup>1</sup>.

**Sue Williamson, Director Libraries, Arts Council England** said: *"Arts Council England is delighted to support The Reading Agency's Summer of Reading programme. We believe not only in the proven power of reading in tackling societal concerns but also that reading is an immensely powerful creative act. As the national development agency for public libraries, we welcome the emphasis on the library network to enable so many to take part using library resources which are free at the point of contact in nearly 3,000 libraries across England. We also welcome the opportunity for publishers, booksellers and libraries to work together in support of this great initiative to encourage everyone to discover the magic that lives within the pages of a book."*

**Karen Napier, CEO, The Reading Agency** said: *"We are delighted to be collaborating with such a wonderful range of partners for the Summer of Reading. After a hugely challenging year, we are acutely aware of the pressure on families and teachers, and the vital need to tackle the attainment gap and ensure children and young people have access to fun reading activity. Last year's Reading Together Day showed the power in collaboration and the appetite across the country for summer reading events and resources, and we are hugely grateful to all the organisations participating this year in yet another hugely important summer initiative to share the proven power of reading."*

**Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage** said: *"Reading is powerful: it teaches us new things, opens our minds, and inspires our creativity. Bringing together a brilliant network of libraries and other organisations, this new initiative will provide fantastic reading events and resources helping to reach those who need support the most."*

Head to <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/> to find out more.

**\*\*\*Ends\*\*\***

### **The Reading Agency**

The Reading Agency is a national charity that tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. We work closely with partners to develop and deliver programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Reading Agency is funded by Arts Council England. [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> Renaissance Learning and Education Policy Institute (2021), [Understanding progress in the 2020/21 academic year](#), DfE

### **About Arts Council England**

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies administering the Government's unprecedented £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Funds. Find out more at [www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19)