

# National Literacy Trust Hubs

## Local Business Promise



Businesses taking action to boost literacy in their local community

KPMG estimated that failure to master basic literacy skills costs the taxpayer £5,000 to £64,000 over an individual's lifetime. This amounts to up to £2.5 billion every year.<sup>1</sup>



In the UK, one person in six lives with poor literacy. This is an intergenerational problem linked with a lack of aspiration, reduced access to employment opportunities and poverty. In the country's most deprived areas, more than a third of adults lack the literacy expected of an 11-year-old. This undermines their wellbeing and potential, and can also have direct costs to business. The CBI reports that 36% of employers are dissatisfied with young people's literacy skills and use of English, with 22% of employers providing remedial literacy training to school and college leavers.

Every community faces different challenges and, since 1995, the National Literacy Trust has worked to address low literacy in disadvantaged communities by developing area-based solutions. We harness community assets and develop innovative partnerships that equip young people with the skills they need to succeed.

## Why should local businesses get involved?



Young people in England aged 16 to 24 have among the lowest literacy levels internationally. England is the only country where the oldest age group (55 to 65-year-olds) has higher proficiency in both literacy and numeracy than the youngest group.<sup>2</sup>

This has serious implications for our international competitiveness. Local businesses, from corner shops to SMEs to larger companies, have a key role to play in raising literacy levels in their local community and the resources, reach and local knowledge to make a real impact. The benefits of getting involved in the literacy campaign in your area are many and include:

- Positioning at the forefront of businesses committing to take action on this important issue
- Creating a positive impact in your local community, and building a sustainable workforce
- Building your corporate reputation, brand value and trust
- Brand exposure on campaign materials and in PR opportunities
- Employee engagement, encouraging personal development and increasing staff satisfaction, plus the attraction of new employees
- The opportunity to join a national network of businesses committed to raising literacy levels in the UK via the *Vision for Literacy Business Pledge*. This was developed by the National Literacy Trust and the National Literacy Forum and has 44 business signatories, including KPMG, McDonald's, Premier League, Sainsbury's and Pearson

# The opportunity for you to improve literacy

## and life chances in your area

Area	Actions you could take
<b>Workplace:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Raise the profile of literacy in the workplace</li><li>› Engage employees as parents</li></ul>	<b>Raise the profile of literacy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Raise awareness of the importance of reading for enjoyment within your workplace with communal book spaces and reading groups</li><li>- Train your staff to be low literacy aware - this helps most in businesses where staff regularly interact with the general public</li><li>- Provide literacy training and support for staff who require it</li><li>- Share local volunteering opportunities with employees</li></ul> <b>Providing support for employees as parents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Allow staff time to support local school literacy programmes and attend parents evenings</li><li>- Help parents understand how they can support their child's literacy through lunchtime sessions delivered by the National Literacy Trust and signpost them to tips and resources on <a href="http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk">www.wordsforlife.org.uk</a></li><li>- Introduce the National Literacy Trust's <i>Parent Time</i> – five hours of an employee's own time and five hours of work time – to support local educational projects and to gain parenting skills</li><li>- Give literacy packs to staff going on maternity or paternity leave</li></ul>
<b>Communities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sponsor schools and programmes</li><li>› Promote volunteer and fundraising opportunities to staff</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sponsor a programme to support communities or wards with low literacy levels</li><li>- Boost a school's literacy teaching by sponsoring National Literacy Trust Network membership, teacher training, BookBenches or adopting a school library</li><li>- Provide volunteers for reading programmes in schools</li><li>- Promote fundraising opportunities for the local campaign and encourage donations to the National Literacy Trust</li></ul>
<b>Marketplace:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Spread the campaign message</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Show your support for raising literacy and life chances in your community on your corporate website</li><li>- Get involved in local campaigns to raise the profile of literacy in your area, for example story competitions, book giveaways, fundraising and community events</li><li>- Share campaign messaging with customers and suppliers and spread the word via social media, in-store displays and local media outreach</li><li>- Collect money at your tills through collecting tins or the Pennies scheme<sup>3</sup></li></ul>

1 Every Child a Chance Trust (2009) The long term costs of literacy difficulties, 2nd ed.

2 OECD (2013) OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First results from the survey of adult skills. OECD Publishing

3 See <http://www.pennies.org.uk/> for more information

## Get involved

We have a range of packages available. To see our work in action and to discuss your needs and business objectives, contact [hubs@literacytrust.org.uk](mailto:hubs@literacytrust.org.uk).

"We know our fans look up to our players as male role models, so joining forces on campaigns which encourage young people to read and dads to read with their children are strengthening our mission to build stronger communities through the inspirational power of Middlesbrough FC!"

**Yvonne Ferguson, Head of Supporter Service at Middlesbrough Football Club**

"I'm supporting the Bradford Literacy Campaign because I believe that reading is important for a child's education. Getting a haircut is a good opportunity for kids to practise reading aloud and I encourage other barbers and hair salons to get kids reading too!"

**Umar Khatab Khokar, Hairdresser, Bradford**

"At Stagecoach we strive to be active members of our local communities, so partnering with the Peterborough Literacy Campaign to inspire a love of writing in the area and celebrate all that this city has to offer has been a great opportunity."

**Zoe Paget, Operations Director, Stagecoach East**



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