

2017 signatories



Vision for Literacy Business Pledge

2017



For more information and to pledge your support visit www.literacytrust.org.uk/businesspledge or contact businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk

#LiteracyPledge

The National Literacy Trust is a registered charity no. 1116260 and a company limited by guarantee no. 5836486 registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in Scotland no. SC042944. Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall Registered address: 68 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL.

In support of



READ ON GET ON

Businesses taking action to drive up literacy levels, boost the economy and improve social mobility

Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2017

As UK business leaders, we know that low literacy undermines our economic competitiveness and sustainability and creates obstacles to a fairer society.

Research for Read On. Get On. estimated that if every child left primary school with the reading skills they need, our economy could be more than £30 billion bigger by 2025¹. Based on the 2013 National Statistics data this would equate to over £500 pounds per household in 2014, nearly £900 in 2020 and over £1,200 per household by 2025². Many employers also face direct costs to their business. CBI reports that 37% of employers are dissatisfied with young people's literacy skills and use of English, with 40% or more employers providing remedial training in basic skills to school and college leavers.³

As well as negatively impacting our economy, low literacy creates barriers to social mobility. Adults with functional literacy earn 16% more than those without⁴ and in the UK's most deprived wards up to 35% of the adult population lack the literacy skills expected of an 11-year-old.⁵ These adults lack the confidence and skills to help their children

with reading and writing and struggle to help them gain the skills they need for future success. This cycle of disadvantage must be broken to give fair life chances to all young people, regardless of their background.

The inequalities also have a wider social impact. 37% of people who rate their health as "very poor" are functionally illiterate, as opposed to 11% who have these skills⁶. 48% of offenders in custody have the reading age at or below that of an 11 year old⁷.

The current situation is holding our economy back; our success as a nation will be built on an economy that encompasses all of the talents and potential of our young people. We must act now.

44 businesses signed up to the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2016 and committed to taking practical action to drive up literacy levels. There has been an increased business commitment to literacy in 2016 and, as business leaders, we are calling on more businesses to join the national literacy campaign in 2017.

Impact in 2016⁸

KPMG have seen a **64% increase** in **literacy volunteers** and have created 7 new literacy-based partnerships.

Boots Opticians held an **event for local businesses** in Nottingham with 5 businesses interested in signing up to the Pledge

Sainsbury's has **increased** the number of **reading corners** in stores in stores from **8 to 20**

Prinovis has branded all literacy-based activity around the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge, adding additional literacy activity not included in their original business plan, and has held 7 employee-based Pledge activities

You are joining 38 charities and organisations that have come together to commit to ambitious goals across several high-profile campaigns, including Read On. Get On., the Fair Education Alliance and the Vision for Literacy. These

goals were met with cross-party support, but we recognise that this ambition cannot be fulfilled by charities, teachers, families and Government alone. The whole of society must play its part.

Developed by members and supporters of the National Literacy Forum



We pledge to elevate the literacy issue within our business and take practical action (commensurate with size) to close the literacy gap and create a fairer society by:

- **Engaging our employees in the literacy challenge**
- **Supporting the drive to raise literacy levels in our local community**
- **Contributing to the national campaign to raise literacy levels**



1 Read On. Get On. (2014) *How reading can help children escape poverty*. Published by Save the Children on behalf of the Read. On. Get On. campaign

2 Read On. Get On. (2014) *How reading can help children escape poverty*. Published by Save the Children on behalf of the Read. On. Get On. campaign, p.18

3 CBI (2015) *Inspiring Growth: CBI/Pearson education and skills survey 2015*. London: CBI.

4 S McIntosh and A Vignoles (2001) *Micro-analysis of the Effects of Literacy and Numeracy*. In: Bynner et al. 2001, *Improving Adult Basic Skills: Benefits to the individual and to society*. London Centre of Longitudinal Studies

5 Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011) *Skills for life survey: small area estimation data*. London: DfBIS.

6 Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011) *Skills for Life survey: Appendix of tables*. London: DfBIS.

7 K Devitt (2011) *Young Adults Today: Education, training and employment and young adults in the criminal justice system fact file*. Brighton: Young People in Focus.

8 This is based on the first 6 months of activity to fulfil the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge 2016: January – July 2016.

Our pledge in more detail

Pledge	Practical Action (at least one action to fulfil each pledge)
<p>Engage our employees in the literacy challenge by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Raising the profile of literacy in the workplace › Engaging employees as parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equip parents we employ with information on how to develop their child's literacy and communication skills at home signposting to tips, activities, organisations, resources and support available. - Raise awareness of the importance of reading for enjoyment within our workplace and regional offices e.g. by communal book spaces. - Commit to understanding staff needs in terms of literacy skill development and providing opportunities for developing these, where appropriate. - Work with employees to determine a specific practical action to promote the importance of literacy within our business.
<p>Support the drive to raise literacy levels in our local community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Working with local schools, libraries, cultural organisations and partners › Promoting volunteer and fundraising opportunities to staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build links with local schools and libraries and encourage regional offices (where applicable) to engage with their local community. - Include literacy development opportunities and reading for pleasure within all relevant community outreach activities. - Provide work experience opportunities to young people in our local community from disadvantaged backgrounds. - Promote opportunities for staff to volunteer to support literacy and reading based activities in their schools, communities and libraries. - Promote fundraising opportunities to staff to help raise language and literacy levels in disadvantaged communities.
<p>Contribute to the national campaign to raise literacy levels by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increasing the evidence-base › Raising awareness of the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribute to the development of the research base through funding educational research. - Increase the evidence base through evaluation of your literacy and reading for pleasure programmes and activity and by providing case studies. - Disseminate the latest research and messaging through our communication channels to a range of audiences, including the public, clients, and policy makers. - Utilise existing relationships with policymakers to progress the literacy agenda. - Utilise all appropriate networks (e.g. clients, suppliers, charity partners) to raise awareness of and build support to tackle the literacy challenge.

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