

## Isle of Wight Libraries Reader Development Strategy

*To promote and foster a love of reading throughout the Island's Community*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reading is an essential life skill and source of pleasure and enjoyment. It is also a gateway to learning, information, inspiration and relaxation. The Isle of Wight Library Service opens that gate for everyone. However, for many people, a library full of books is an unfamiliar landscape, and the time available for browsing is limited. This is an essential problem that reader development initiatives can address.

### **1. DEFINITION**

Reader Development means active intervention to:

- Increase people's confidence and enjoyment of reading
- Open up reading choices
- Offer opportunities for people to share their reading experiences
- Raise the status of reading as a creative activity

Active intervention means consciously planning to do something to have a positive effect. Many readers will find their own way to extend their reading habits by themselves, but library staff can actively plan to intervene in the everyday process to offer more to readers.

Reader Development work is reader centred. It starts with the reader and the individual reading experience, not with the author, subject or level of book. Reader Development sells the reading experience and empowers readers to make choices and take risks with their reading across a wide range of material.

### **2. READERS AND THEIR NEEDS**

We can identify different types of readers, and through reader development activities we can actively open up choices for each individual.

**Basic Skills Readers** – These readers have no reading history. Reader Development activities must engage curiosity and promote the idea of reading as a fun activity.

**Emerging Readers** – These readers have begun to master the technical aspects of reading and need to be encouraged to continue to explore reading and enjoy it as a pleasurable activity, enhancing their reading confidence and self esteem.

**Reluctant Readers** – These people have never engaged in the reading experience, never used libraries and have no concept of reading for pleasure. For these people, we need to make the library space more welcoming for those chance visits.

**Experienced Readers** – A reader centred approach can help experienced readers to widen their reading choices and develop new interests. Experienced readers can also act as informal mentors to other readers, by writing reviews and making recommendations.

### **3. PROMOTING READING**

Key to Reader Development is the promotion of reading. It is essential to raise the status of reading as a creative activity.

This will be done through:

**Consultation** – with staff (through the Reader Development Working Party), users and non-users about potential, present and past reader development activities

**Target Setting** – branches will have Reader Development targets incorporated into Branch Development Plans to maintain a consistent approach across the Island

**Partnerships** – with local businesses, media, Prison Libraries and national agencies to establish reading development both locally and nationally

**Stock** – The library stock must reflect the diversity of the local and wider community, and offer the opportunity for readers to explore the reading experience. The stock must be maintained in good condition and be attractively displayed to ensure that new reading routes are non-threatening and easily navigated.

**Promotional Displays** – These must be produced within every library branch and include eye catching posters and leaflets about libraries, books and reading. This will highlight stock that may be unfamiliar to readers and make it more accessible, and encourage them to try new genres, authors etc.

**Promotional Events** – A programme of events is to be decided annually in consultation with the Reader Development Working Party. It will be developed across the Island and promote a love of reading. National events such as World Book Day and Family Learning Week are to be incorporated.

### **4. STAFF TRAINING**

All library staff will receive Reader Development Training through Library Service Training Days and national training opportunities as appropriate. This will ensure a professional and consistent reader centred approach across Island Libraries.

## **5. READER DEVELOPMENT AWARENESS**

The Reader Development Librarian and staff must be aware of developments and research into reader development activities both locally and nationally and reflect these findings into local activities. Eg: Reading Partners, The Vital Link

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