

MEDIA RELEASE – Monday 19 February 2018

The Reader welcomes incredible support from players of People's Postcode Lottery

Funding from players will support *Shared Reading* movement to help people affected by social isolation, mental health issues and dementia across Great Britain.

The Reader, a national charity which builds stronger, healthier communities through volunteer-led *Shared Reading* groups, has been awarded £400,000 of funds raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

The Reader brings people together through *Shared Reading* – a deceptively simple model which creates a positive impact for people of all ages and backgrounds, in particular those affected by social isolation, mental health issues or dementia. Weekly reading groups provide a friendly and welcome space where stories and poems are read aloud, and thoughts and reflections can be shared. Group members find personal meaning in the literature, improving their emotional well-being, and form social connections with others, creating stronger and more supportive communities.

In a recent evaluation of group members' health and well-being, 93% reported that they felt better after attending a *Shared Reading* session and 91% recognised improvements to their confidence and communications skills. The impact of *Shared Reading* is also felt by Reader Volunteers who lead the weekly groups, with over 90% reporting improved personal well-being, a greater sense of achievement and feeling more connected to others.

The Reader currently supports over 500 specially trained volunteers who deliver over 80% of the 403 *Shared Reading* groups running nationally. The charity is creating a people-led movement to bring communities together through *Shared Reading*, making groups accessible to everyone across the UK.

Jane Davis, Director of The Reader, said: "*Shared Reading has the power to change lives and we want to make it possible for everyone, whoever they are, wherever they are, to find a group in their community. We want to bring Shared Reading to every postcode in England, Scotland and Wales, and with this award from players of People's Postcode Lottery, we'll have the core funding to strengthen our movement and support the incredible work that our staff and volunteers do week in, week out right across the country. We want to say a huge thank you to players of People's Postcode Lottery for this incredible award.*"

Helen Willows, a GP and Reader Volunteer in Shropshire, said: "*It's fantastic to know that The Reader has the support of the players of the People's Postcode Lottery. As a volunteer for The Reader, you don't feel like you're working for them - you're working with them, you're part of something much bigger. I run two Shared Reading groups a week and coordinate other volunteers in my area, it's such a comfort to know that The Reader staff are behind us, that they are there when we need them and have a genuine interest, not just in our groups, but in us – the volunteers.*"

The Reader deliver *Shared Reading* groups across the UK, with large pockets of work in Greater London, the South West, North Wales and in the North West where their headquarters are situated in South Liverpool.

A representative of the People's Postcode Lottery will present The Reader with a cheque at a Volunteer Celebration event in Wirral next month.

If you would like further information on *Shared Reading* or how you can volunteer, please visit www.thereader.org.uk/

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Details about the cheque presentation event and guest list will be announced in the coming weeks. The presentation will be made at a Volunteer Celebration Event in Wirral, where The Reader's first *Shared Reading* group began in 2001.

For further information, please contact: Emma Walsh, Communications Assistant:
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About The Reader www.thereader.org.uk

The Reader is an award-winning, charitable social enterprise which brings people together, changes lives and builds communities through sharing great literature. Our unique *Shared Reading* model brings small groups together each week to read aloud poetry, short stories, novels or plays with informal, personal group discussion led by a trained Reader Leader.

For over a decade The Reader has been working in partnership with CCGs, Public Health Bodies and NHS Trusts across the UK to support thousands of people with a wide range of health and social issues including, mental health conditions, dementia, chronic pain, isolation and recovery from substance misuse.

Whether delivered by volunteers or Reader staff, *Shared Reading* offers people a practical way to improve well-being, build confidence and connect with others.

SOCIAL - @thereaderorg #SharedReading

The Reader - Charity Number 1126806 (SCO43054 Scotland)

About People's Postcode Lottery

- People's Postcode Lottery manages multiple charity lotteries (also known as society lotteries). Players play with their postcodes to win cash prizes, while raising money for charities and good causes across Great Britain and globally
- A minimum of 32% goes directly to charities and players have raised £272.8 million to date for good causes across the country
- £10 for 10 draws paid monthly in advance with prizes every day. For further prize information visit: www.postcode lottery.co.uk/prizes

- Maximum amount a single ticket can win is 10% of the draw revenue to a maximum of £400,000
- Players can sign up by Direct Debit online at www.postcodelottery.co.uk, or by calling 0808 10-9-8-7-6-5
- Postcode Lottery Limited is regulated by the Gambling Commission under licences number: 000-000829-N-102511-014 and Number: 000-000829-R-102513-013. Registered office: Titchfield House, 69/85 Tabernacle Street, London, EC2A 4RR
- For details on which society lottery is running each week, visit www.postcodelottery.co.uk/society