

Vision for Literacy Business Pledge

2016



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

Vision for Literacy Business Pledge

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

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. Many employers also face direct costs to their business. 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.

As well as negatively impacting our economy, low literacy creates barriers to social mobility. Parents and families play an essential role in supporting children's literacy and language development, but in the UK's most deprived wards up to 35% of the adult population lack the literacy skills expected of an 11-year-old. 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.

If all children were leaving primary school with good literacy skills, foundations would be laid for a future workforce that can meet rising demands as the economic recovery gains pace. 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.

Businesses have a unique opportunity to join the national literacy campaign to help drive up literacy levels. 38 charities and organisations 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 have been met with cross-party support, but as business leaders, we recognise that this ambition cannot be fulfilled by charities, teachers, families and Government alone. The whole of society must play its part.

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

| Pledge | Practical Action (at least one action to fulfil each pledge) |
|---|---|
| Engage our employees in the literacy challenge by: <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, 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. |
| Support the drive to raise literacy levels in our local community by: <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, libraries and cultural organisations 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. |
| Contribute to the national campaign to raise literacy levels by: <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 research, evidence and messaging around the importance of language, literacy and reading for pleasure by providing case studies and sharing best practice.- 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. |

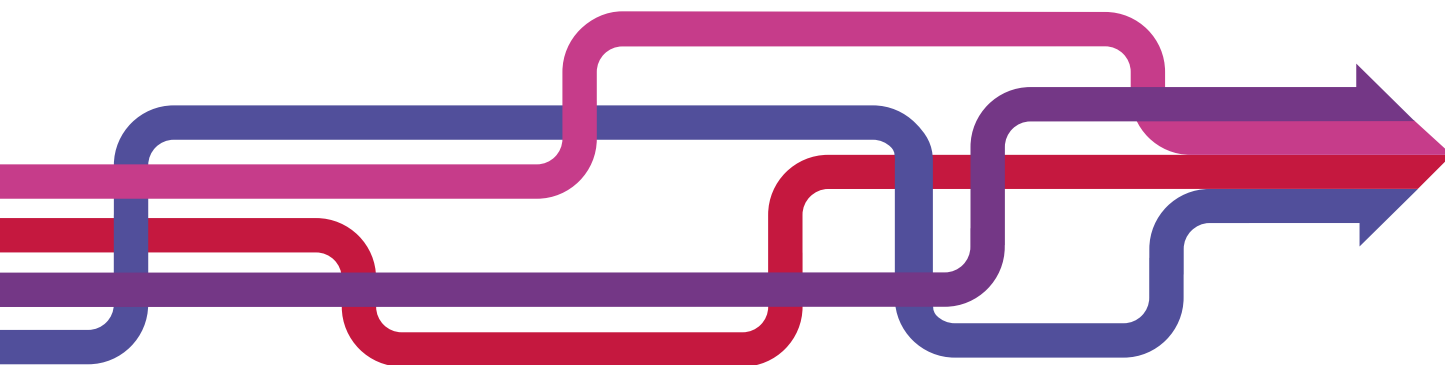


1. Every Child a Chance Trust (2009) The long term costs of literacy difficulties, 2nd edition. p.5. Available at: <http://readingrecovery.org/images/pdfs/Reading_Recovery/Research_and_Evaluation/long_term_costs_of_literacy_difficulties_2nd_edition_2009.pdf> 2. CBI (2014) Gateway to growth: CBI/Pearson education and skills survey 2014. London: CBI. 3. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2011) Skills for life survey: small area estimation data. London: DfBIS.

Developed by members and supporters of the National Literacy Forum



In association with



For more information and to pledge your support visit

www.literacytrust.org.uk/businesspledge

or contact businesspledge@literacytrust.org.uk

#LiteracyPledge

In support of



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.