

News release

Health Education England collaborates with library and reading experts to improve patient choice

Health Education England (HEE) has signed a memorandum of understanding with leading organisations in the library and reading arena in a bid to promote greater and more personalised healthcare literacy across the population.

HEE will work with the Society of Chief Librarians and The Reading Agency to promote the importance of health literacy. The three organisations will work together to devise and launch programmes that allow people to access personalised information that allows them to make more informed choices about their care and treatment and improve the quality of their life.

The Society of Chief Librarians leads and manages public libraries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and advocates continuous improvement in the library service. Its membership is made up of heads of service at each library authority.

The Reading Agency is a national charity inspiring people of all ages and all backgrounds to read for pleasure and empowerment. Working with partners, their aim is to make reading accessible to everyone.

The provision of high quality, evidence-based, accessible health information is an important driver in HEE's Knowledge for Healthcare Framework for NHS library and knowledge services, published in 2015. The framework was developed to enable NHS bodies, staff, learners, patients and the public to use the right knowledge and evidence at the right time and place to enable better clinical decision-making.

Patrick Mitchell, Director, South of England, Health Education England said:

"I am delighted to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with the Society of Chief Librarians and The Reading Agency. It is a very positive step towards collaborating across sectors to underpin health literacy, ensuring people can access high quality information to assist them to make informed choices about their care and treatment."

Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive of The Reading Agency, commented:

"It is with great pleasure that we are able to formalise this important new partnership with Health Education England. We look forward to using the MOU to activate an exciting programme of activity supporting our shared work with the Society of Chief Librarians on Reading Well and the Universal Health Offer as well as HEE's ambitions for the delivery of Patient and Public Information."

Neil MacInnes, President of The Society of Librarians, added:

"It's wonderful news that SCL and The Reading Agency's work with HEE has now been formally ratified. Our partnership will strengthen the delivery of Reading Well and the Universal Health Offer through public libraries – keeping people in our communities active and engaged as we continue to support their health and wellbeing."

Further information on the campaigns and initiatives to be created following this agreement will be released by HEE.

Ends

Health Education England

HEE was established on 28 June 2012, working as a shadow Special Health Authority from 1 October 2012. It took on its full operational responsibilities from 1 April 2013. It has five national functions:

- providing national leadership on planning and developing the healthcare and public health workforce;
- promoting high quality education and training that is responsive to the changing needs of patients and local communities, including responsibility for ensuring the effective delivery of important national functions such as medical trainee recruitment;
- ensuring security of supply of the health and public health workforce;
- appointing and supporting the development of LETBs; and
- allocating and accounting for NHS education and training resources and the outcomes achieved.

For more information on HEE visit our website – www.hee.nhs.uk or follow us on Twitter- @nhs_healthedeng or Facebook- www.facebook.com/nhshee

For further information contact HEE.pressoffice@nhs.net

The Society of Chief Librarians

The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) is a local government association made up of the chief librarian of each library authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, through sharing best practices, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service. www.goscl.com

For further information, contact: Marsha Lowe at marsha@realismworks.co.uk or 07939 121414.

About the Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is the leading charity inspiring people of all ages and all backgrounds to read for pleasure and empowerment. Working with our partners, our aim is to make reading accessible to everyone. The Reading Agency is funded by the Arts Council. www.readingagency.org.uk

For more information about The Reading Agency's work, contact Samantha Cox on Samantha.cox@readingagency.org.uk or 020 7324 8909.