

# Employee engagement guide for the National Year of Reading

How your workplace can volunteer to  
Go All In for the National Year of Reading



**GO  
ALL  
IN.**

National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

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Change your story

# Letter from David Hayman, Director, National Year of Reading 2026

Thank you very much for signing up to support the National Year of Reading 2026 by volunteering through your workplace. This handbook outlines all the things you can do at work and with colleagues to embrace the National Year of Reading.

Enjoying reading has lifelong benefits. Whether it's getting your first job or building connections within our communities, reading helps us achieve our goals; but at the moment, it's something too few people are doing, and we as a nation are falling out of love with reading. With your help, we can change that.

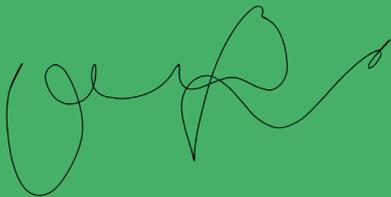
The National Year of Reading 2026 is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address the decline in reading enjoyment, and your workplace volunteering is vital to its success and its legacy. As part of your role, we ask you to encourage those around you to "Go All In" on their interests and passions through reading, whether it's football, family time, fashion, cooking, comics or crafting.

Through volunteering as a National Year of Reading Champion in your workplace, you can bring this message to life in communities across the UK, helping to make it a year to remember.

In this guide you'll find fun, inclusive ideas to spark your imagination on how you and the people you work with can 'Go All In', sharing passions, making a difference and having fun at the same time.

Thank you for your commitment to 'Go All In' and for helping people up and down the country to rediscover the love of reading, no matter how they do it.

David Hayman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Hayman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

# Contents

Go All In in the workplace page 4

Getting started page 5

Going All In throughout the year page 6

The essentials page 11



# Go All In, in your workplace

Going All In with the National Year of Reading means following your interests and passions - using reading to explore what matters to you and sharing that joy with others. We've put together some ideas for all the exciting things you could do to embrace the National Year of Reading in your workplace. If you're looking to spread the word among your community as well, we've included some more things you can do, at the end of this document.

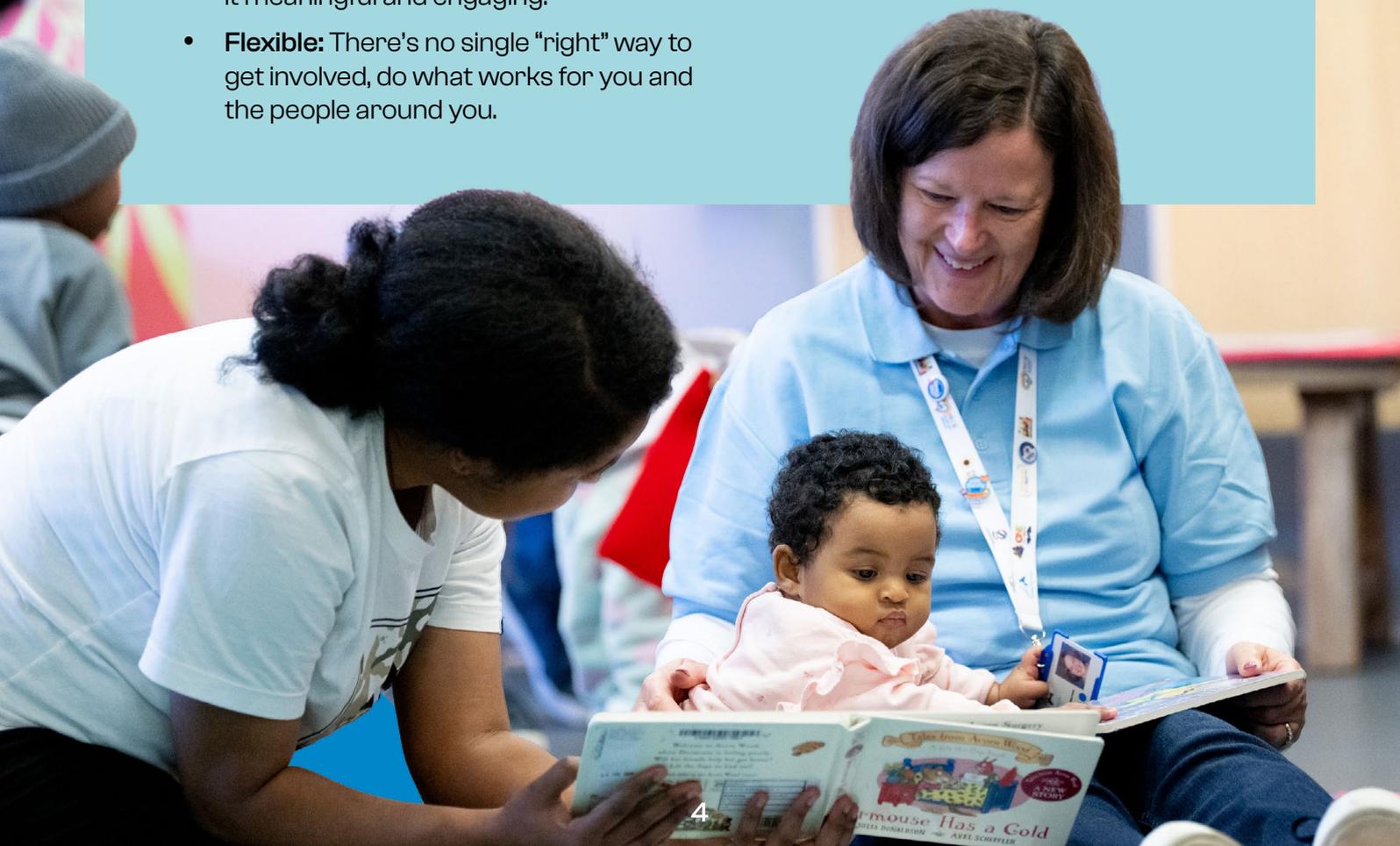
For us, reading for enjoyment goes beyond enjoying a paperback in quiet corner. It's a funny poem you see on social media that makes you smile. It's reading the subtitles on your favourite show, so you don't wake the kids. It's what you listen to when travelling. It's experiencing stories that are meaningful to you, in the ways that work for you.

There's no minimum time commitment to get involved in the National Year of Reading, and no need for specialist knowledge. Pick what feels fun, fits your routine and helps people in your workplace read into their passions. Every action helps make reading a bit more exciting and accessible for the people around you.

## What 'Go All In' means

The National Year of Reading is all about celebrating curiosity, creativity and the things people love, and our Champions help bring that to life. Here's what 'Go All In' looks like in practice:

- **Fun comes first:** Reading should be enjoyable. Share the things that excite you and spark others' interest. Choose activities that you and your community will enjoy.
- **Inclusive and welcoming:** Everyone's reading journey is different. Champion reading in a way that's open and non-judgemental.
- **Celebrate all forms of reading:** Books, comics, blogs, podcasts, audiobooks, matchday programmes, recipes - it all counts.
- **Connect with passions:** Link reading to hobbies, interests and everyday life, to make it meaningful and engaging.
- **Flexible:** There's no single "right" way to get involved, do what works for you and the people around you.



# Getting started

When businesses champion a national campaign, people pay attention. Your endorsement gives the National Year of Reading visibility, credibility and reach that no charity could achieve alone.

And, you don't need to invent something new. You just need to bring the National Year of Reading into the work you already do, making it a natural extension of how you support your people and your communities.

We've put together some ideas for how you can get started in your workplace straight away:

- **Help spread the message** - use your internal comms, newsletters, staff networks and public channels to help people discover the campaign and understand why it matters. Go one step further and download the [National Year of Reading Toolkit](#) - use the materials to promote the campaign.
- **Support volunteering** - Encourage staff to volunteer through your existing programmes or promote [national volunteering](#) needs across your organisation.
- **Register for updates** - [Stay up to date](#) with news and updates and make sure you don't miss a thing across the year. Plus, be the first to hear about opportunities to partner and collaborate.
- **Share what you read** - encourage staff to swap recommendations - books, audiobooks or podcasts - through book clubs, newsletters or even email signatures. It can be a great icebreaker for meetings.
- **Amplify staff networks** - Invite staff networks to curate and share reading lists that reflect their communities, interests and lived experiences.
- **Create shared book spaces** - set up book swaps, reading corners, or community shelves in offices, receptions or waiting areas - refresh them throughout the year.
- **Get involved with libraries** - connect with your local library to support events, volunteering and activities, and encourage staff to take part.
- **Set up a reading group** - reading groups or 'book clubs' are a great way to share a love of reading with others. It's an opportunity to explore new stories, share opinions and discover new viewpoints. You can use the reading group to lean into interests or have fun trying out new ones.
- **Organise a book drive** - join community groups across the country that regularly hold book drives, by inviting colleagues to bring in any gently used children's books they no longer use. Donate these books to children without books, giving them the opportunity to discover the joy of book ownership. For more information, visit: [Give Books - Children's Book Project](#).
- **Celebrate your successes** - big or small - the easiest way to tell us is to share your activity online using the [#GoAllIn2026](#) and [#NationalYearOfReading2026](#) hashtags and use the pledge form on our website to share what your workplace is doing and to become one of our National Year of Reading pledge partners.
- **Celebrate others** - spread the word about what others are doing by resharing stories on social media. Follow us here:

Instagram [@go\\_all\\_in\\_2026](#)

YouTube [youtube.com/@GoAllIn2026](#)

TikTok [tiktok.com/@go\\_all\\_in\\_2026](#)

X [x.com/Go\\_All\\_In\\_2026](#)

Facebook [facebook.com/goallin2026](#)

# Celebrate throughout the year

To guide your efforts throughout the year, we've created a calendar of moments that celebrate reading, and compiled suggestions for how you might embrace these moments in your workplace. Taking part in any activity, big or small, is valuable, and if there's another activity that better suits your organisation to 'Go All In' then that's great too.

If you have any questions or need support, send us a message at [nrchampions@literacytrust.org.uk](mailto:nrchampions@literacytrust.org.uk).

January	February	March	April	May	June
New Year	Storytelling Week	World Book Day	World Book Night	National Share a Story month	The Big Lunch
July	August	September	October	November	December
Summer Reading Challenge	Summer of Sports	Back to school	Take 10 to read for World Mental Health Day	Behind the stories November	Festive period

## Calendar of moments

### Storytelling Week – January 31 to February 8

Storytelling Week is an annual opportunity to celebrate the power of stories in all their forms, whether it's poems, lyrics or podcasts, everyone is encouraged to take time during the week to immerse themselves in telling, sharing and listening to stories.

#### Suggested activity: Story Share

**Step one:** Share a prompt with the people you work with, for example:

*"Tell us what you are passionate about and how you got into it."*

or

*"Tell us a story that's stayed with you, and why."*

**Step two:** Encourage colleagues to respond in the way that suits them, be it an email, voice note, video or an image with a caption. Can you share the stories with your community and ask them to join in?

**Step three:** Share a selection of the submissions during Storytelling Week (use the #GoAllIn2026 and #NationalYearOfReading2026 hashtags if you're doing this on social media). Encourage colleagues to respond or share recommendations.

## World Book Day – March 5

World Book Day inspires every child to enjoy the life-changing benefits of reading for fun and there's plenty of room for adults to get involved as well.

### Suggested activity: Swap Spot

**Step one:** Find a place or space where people can bring in and share books, magazines, comics or graphic novels. It could be a dedicated shelf, a coffee table or something similar.

**Step two:** Encourage colleagues to bring in books they've loved to add to the space, perhaps with a sticky note saying who's brought it in and why they liked it. If you work in a public-facing organisation, you could encourage customers to get involved too.

**Step three:** Share a picture of your space online. If you already host a swap, why not use World Book Day to highlight it?

## World Book Night – April 23

World Book Night brings people from all backgrounds together for one reason – to inspire others to read more. For World Book Night, connect with stories by taking part in relaxed creative activities that share how fun reading can be.

### Suggested Activity: Hold a World Book Night quiz

**Step one:** Choose team names inspired by favourite stories. Take turns to design a question round. Fun ideas include:

- Who said it: Taylor Swift or Shakespeare? See here for inspiration: [bit.ly/49QhLMc](https://bit.ly/49QhLMc)
- Picture rounds of famous authors or characters.
- First/last lines – name the book from its iconic opening or closing sentence (played via audiobook).
- Guess that book quote.
- Which films were books first?
- Famous last words – match famous fictional deaths/books.

You can share pictures from the night using the hashtags [#GoAllIn2026](#) and [#NationalYearOfReading2026](#)

**Step two:** Talk to your organisation about purchasing **Quick Reads** - easy-to-read books by bestselling authors that help all types of readers to get involved in World Book Night.

**Step three:** Join the National Hour of Reading.

Join the reading hour from 7-8pm on April 23, to dedicate time to reading and listening to stories in whatever form works for you.

# National Share a Story month – May

## Suggested Activity: Share your passion

**Step one:** Pick your passion. It could be food, sport, travel, music, nature – as long as it's meaningful to you.

**Step two:** Match it to a story. Any format counts, whether a book, comic, cookbook, graphic novel or magazine.

**Step three:** Use your book swap space to share the story. Add a one-line sticky note "If you love \_\_\_\_, try this" and swap with your colleagues.

**Step four:** Share it even wider. If you're involved in your passion outside of work or belong to a group related to your passion, share your story.

## The Big Lunch - June

June is a month for connection in the National Year of Reading, and what better way to connect than over food.

### **Suggested activity: Host a Big Lunch with a theme of "connection", connect with stories, with food and with your community.**

Started by The Eden Project in 2009, The Big Lunch encourages people, whether colleagues, friends or families, to come together to share food, fun and friendship and build deeper connections in their community. Whether it's a simple cuppa with a few people, or something bigger with the whole organisation, make this a moment where you and your colleagues come together to share stories, ideas, experiences and cultures.

If you're looking for inspiration on what to eat or drink, here are a few ideas:

- Childhood comfort eats – is there a story from your childhood connected with food or drink?
- Cultural connections – from Bath buns to croissants, you can celebrate cultures meaningful to you through food.
- Fictional food – perhaps avoid Oliver Twist's gruel, but from Paddington Bear's marmalade sandwiches to Bruce Bogtrotter's chocolate cake, stories can serve as a slice of inspiration.

### **Conversation menu:**

- Is there a recipe or dish in your family that comes with a great story?
- Have you ever discovered a food through a book or film and then tried it in real life?
- If you could invite any fictional character to this lunch, who would it be and what would you serve them?
- What's a book you've started but never finished – and why?

**Step one:** Host a Big Lunch in your workplace. Can you encourage those who attend to host their own Big Lunch with friends, family or neighbours and pass the stories on?

**Step two:** Keep the conversation going – become one of our **national year of reading champions** and inspire your community to carry on sharing stories. Want to do even more in your community? Our **role-finding tool** can help you find something.

## World Cup of Stories - July

July sees the final of the FIFA World Cup, with nations battling it out on the football field. Why not use this moment to read stories from across the globe and perhaps even find a new favourite?

### Suggested activity: World Cup of Stories

**Step one:** Organise a sweepstake of countries involved in the World Cup, with all participants allocated a nation each.

**Step two:** Participants find a story that links to their country. It could be a podcast, an article, a book, a film, a song or similar – so long as it's a great tale!

**Step three:** Participants' stories are set against one another in a knockout tournament, with people voting for their favourite, until a winner is found.

## Summer Reads - August

### Suggested activity: Summer story playlist

**Step one:** Think about books/podcasts/audio that you'll be taking to the beach or park this summer. Is there one you've been saving specially?

**Step two:** Compile an organisation-wide holiday-ready playlist of the audiobooks and podcasts (Spotify can be good for this). For physical items, can you restock book swap shelves with recommended reads you've brought back from holiday?

**Step three:** Share your playlist or a picture of your bookshelves online using the hashtags #GoAllIn2026 and #NationalYearOfReading2026. Even better if you can share pictures of you listening or reading your stories in places around the UK, or even the world.

## Back to school - September

As children head back to school this month, we're reminded of ways we all use stories to learn and grow in our day-to-day lives. Use September to share life-changing or inspiring tips, articles or stories that have helped you.

### Suggested activity: Share your inspiration

**Step one:** Share a self-help book, podcast, article or resource that you have found helpful in your work or personal life, with your colleagues. Write, record or film a message about why it meant something to you.

**Step two:** Create an online library where people can see one another's submissions and messages.

**Step three:** Select something that one of your colleagues has recommended and give it a try. If you want, you could add your own message to the library reviewing it.

## Take 10 to Read for World Mental Health Day - October

For some people, reading the right story is a great way to boost their mental health. In October we're encouraging workplaces to down tools for ten minutes to create a space for reading.

### Suggested activity: Drop everything and read

**Step one:** Find time during your day, whether it's during the commute, at lunchtime or by blocking out a reading break in your calendar, to read for ten minutes. Encourage your colleagues to do the same.

**Step two:** Tell others that you've made the space for reading this month. Whether it's online or in person, help us spread the word and encourage others to boost their mental health through reading the right story.

**Step three:** Share a picture of what you're reading online, and how it has made you feel, using the hashtags #GoAllIn2026 and #NationalYearOfReading2026.

## Stories Behind the Headlines - November

You can't make this up...some of the greatest stories ever told are those that happen to real people. In November we want to focus on incredible non-fiction stories that should be shared.

### Suggested activity: What's the story?

**Step one:** Create a list of articles or podcasts or autobiographies that you've loved this year that tell the stories of real events and people from around the world? Encourage colleagues to think about, and tell others about, the amazing stories they have come across this year.

**Step two:** Lunchtime Listen: Can you organise a screening or lunchtime listen of biopics or pods related to any of the articles collected?

## Festive period - December

Over the holidays lots of us will combine the joy of food and storytelling. Talk to your colleagues about special recipes they may be planning and why.

### Suggested activity: Stories from the table

**Step one:** Invite people from across your organisation to share favourite family recipes and the memories behind them.

**Step two:** Compile them into a shared cookbook pdf that celebrates culture, creativity and connection, bonus points for photographs of food you've made or creative illustrations to accompany the recipes.

**Step three:** Can you share images of the recipes, and how they turned out, online using the hashtags #GoAllIn2026 and #NationalYearOfReading2026, you may even find other recipes from National Year of Reading Champions around the country that you wish to try!

# The essentials

## Staying Safe and Respectful

We want everyone to enjoy the National Year of Reading safely, so here are a few simple guidelines for volunteering:

- **Keep it safe:** You are responsible for ensuring the activities you organise are safe. Follow the policy of your organisation, if applicable, or the professional advice of staff supervising any facilities or buildings you're using.
- **Be respectful:** Your actions in person or online should be welcoming, respectful and inclusive.
- **Reputation:** As we're unable to oversee all activities taking place across the UK, we ask that you don't imply that the National Literacy Trust has approved your activity. Instead, please say it was 'inspired by' the National Literacy Trust for the National Year of Reading.
- **Working with children:** For safeguarding reasons, the activities we suggest do not involve working directly with – in person or online – children, young people or vulnerable adults who you don't already work with or care for.

## Getting Support and Staying Connected

You're never on your own as a National Year of Reading Champion:

Get advice, help or share your experience with our team at [NYRchampions@literacytrust.org.uk](mailto:NYRchampions@literacytrust.org.uk)

Share your story: We want to hear what you're up to and the easiest way to tell us is to share your activity online using the #GoAllIn2026 and #NationalYearOfReading2026 hashtags and use the pledge form on our website to share what your workplace is doing and to become one of our National Year of Reading pledge partners.

Follow us:

Instagram [@go\\_all\\_in\\_2026](https://www.instagram.com/go_all_in_2026)

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X [x.com/Go\\_All\\_In\\_2026](https://x.com/Go_All_In_2026)

Facebook [facebook.com/goallin2026](https://www.facebook.com/goallin2026)

There are several charities in the UK that can provide specialist volunteering opportunities for businesses. Our [role-finding tool](#) can help you find the one that works for you.

## Volunteering Outside of the Workplace

If you want to make a difference as part of the National Year of Reading, outside of the workplace, our role-finder can help you to find the opportunity that works for you and we'll regularly be sharing stories of volunteers who have done just that across the year, through our website and socials.

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