

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

18 June 2026

Dear Provider,

Welcome to the Early Years, SEND and Childcare briefing delivered to you on a fortnightly basis.

This briefing contains information/updates on:

- [Transition Hub for parents and practitioners](#)
- [Early Years, SEND and Childcare offer](#)
- [EY SEND Referrals](#)
- [Best Start in Life Family Hubs](#)
- [Compliments/celebrations](#)

Safeguarding

Ofsted blog

<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2026/06/12/how-safeguarding-and-childrens-welfare-and-wellbeing-underpin-the-september-2026-updates-to-early-years-inspections/>

Childrens media use

Ofcom has published a [report](#) looking at media use, attitudes and understanding among children and young people aged 6 months to 17-years-old in the UK.

Voice of the child

This series of [expert insight films](#) has been designed to help people who work with babies and infants to identify the infant's voice and incorporate it into their practice.

BFfC training and network offer:

- **DASH & MARAC Training, Level 2 – Free**
8 July, 1.30-4.30pm, Civic Centre
Book on via the [application form](#)
- **Domestic Abuse Awareness Training, Level 1 – Free**
14 July, 9.30am-12.30pm. Teams
Book on via the [application form](#)
- **Safeguarding Workshop 1 – Whistleblowing and professional curiosity – Free**
29 July 6.30-8pm, Civic Centre
Book via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

Leadership

We're pleased to share an overview of our approach to supporting early years and childcare providers across Reading for 2026–2028

Our Early Years, Childcare and SEND teams will continue to work in partnership with you to support high-quality, inclusive provision and the best possible outcomes for children and families. Our work is guided by national priorities and frameworks,

including *Best Start in Life*, SEND reforms, safeguarding requirements, and the *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework*.

Currently our work is shaped by four key priorities:

1. **Safe practice, health and wellbeing:** Work in partnership with early years, childcare providers and wider professionals to safeguard children, promote their welfare and wellbeing, and support their physical and emotional health.
2. **High quality workforce and leadership:** Collaborate with the sector to develop strong leadership and skilled practice across early years and childcare settings, improving quality and consistency while supporting workforce skills, mental health, and wellbeing.
3. **Early learning, development and reducing inequalities:** Provide enhanced support to early years providers through *Journey to Reception, Enrichment and Little Foundations Projects* improving Good Level of Development (GLD) outcomes by raising quality, strengthening family support, and narrowing gaps for disadvantaged children – helping every child get the best possible start in life.
4. **Sufficiency and sustainability of provision:** Work strategically with early years and childcare leaders, providers, and partners to ensure sufficient, sustainable places for Reading's children that are accessible, equitable, high-quality, and supported by effective workforce recruitment and retention.

Support will continue to be tailored to your setting and delivered flexibly through a range of approaches, including:

- Partnership contacts
- Training and networks
- Advisory surgeries and drop-ins
- Project work
- Peer matching
- Coaching and mentoring
- Self-evaluation tools
- Signposting to wider professionals & services

A **Partnership Contact** may take the form of a visit, meeting, teams/phone call or dedicated training session.

The **Framework** of support is attached – this approach is designed to ensure you receive the right level of support at the right time.

Self-Refer

You can now also **self-refer** to our service for a range of options to meet your needs, including targeted advisory support for leadership, high-quality provision, safe practice and SEND, as well as business advice, bespoke or whole-setting training and project participation.

Fill out the form here - [**Early Years & Childcare Support – Self Referral Form**](#)

Supporting Children & Families

Additionally, if you are working with a child or family who may benefit from extra support with development before starting school, with permission you can refer them to the Home Learning Education Programme.

Fill out a form to link with an EYFS & Starting School Champion here – [Home Learning Education – Referral](#)

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you and will share further updates through our networks. Please do get in touch with the team if you have any questions.

Ofsted's chief inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver, has said the inspectorate is to 'crackdown' on notifications, looking at patterns of no or lots of notifications by early years settings.

[Nursery World – Ofsted to 'crackdown' on notifications by early years settings – Nursery World](#)

Early Years Leadership & Governance Network

We would like to invite those in a leadership role such as managers, deputies, owners and committee members to join us for an in person networking event at the Civic Centre on Wednesday 24 June at 8.30am. Book on via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

Event Agenda

8:30am – Breakfast, Networking, and Introductions

Opportunity to network, catch up with colleagues, and meet your **EYFS & Starting School Champion**

8:50am – Best Start in Life

A review of the national strategy and local approach, with information on how you can get involved

9.15am – Little Foundations Baby Project

Sharing key findings from the project and inviting your input on next steps

9.30am – University of Reading

Learn about **Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS)** and the opportunities available for you, your team, and your setting

9.45am – Best Start Family Hubs

An introduction to the new *Best Start in Life Family Hubs* launched in March. Find out what services look like in your area, what is available, and how you can connect with your local hub.

EYFS and Beyond

Transition Hub for parents and professionals

Starting school is a key time for both children and parents or carers. Many children see this as a positive occurrence. However, some children and families will struggle with the move to a new environment. This first experience of school can have a profound influence on children's school career.

A quality transition process should support both children and families to feel confident and secure in their new environment and future learning.

With this in mind Reading Early Years team, in collaboration with local schools and settings have agreed and developed a transition process for children of all abilities. Part of this process includes the sharing of the child's learning and development report as well as possible visits from schools to settings prior to starting.

For early years settings/professionals: [Early Years and SEND Transition to school or nursery](#)

For parents and carers: [Your Child's journey to school starts at home](#)

Togetherness - a new programme for practitioners working with children and families

Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading Councils have introduced **Togetherness** across Berkshire West through a jointly funded three-year multi-user licence.

This provides **free, unlimited access** to a wide range of online resources for families, alongside **free CPD-accredited training** for practitioners, and could be of particular interest to staff members who work with families and children.

What is Togetherness?

Togetherness (formerly the Solihull Approach) is an evidence-based programme that promotes emotional wellbeing, child development and positive family relationships. Used nationally and internationally since 1996, it demonstrates strong outcomes for both families and professionals. Courses are developed by clinical psychologists, health specialists, and parents, and are designed to be accessible, reflective and practical.

Benefits for practitioners (free CPD)

The professional licence provides practitioners across Berkshire West with free, unlimited access to specialist Togetherness training modules. These support trauma-informed, attachment-aware and neurodevelopment-aware practice, with CPD certificates and ongoing learning resources included.

Benefits for families

Families will have free access to more than 15 online pathways, sometimes described as courses, covering:

- Baby bonding and antenatal/postnatal support
- Understanding your child / young person
- Support for additional needs
- Teen brain development and feelings
- Parental wellbeing and relationships

Information is available in multiple languages, including voiceovers and built-in evaluation, and is associated with improvements in:

- Parent–child relationships
- Children's prosocial behaviour
- Parental confidence
- Reductions in stress, anxiety and behavioural difficulties

Further information can be found on the [Togetherness website](#)

- (PCGT) Access Code: **BWFAMILIES**
- (PRF) Access Code: **BWFAMILIES_PRF**

Please share with your staff and families

TOGETHERNESS
Bringing the Solihull Approach to the world

NHS

CPD: Raising standards for children and families

Free online courses for professionals

Advance your knowledge in trauma, attachment and brain development.

togetherness.co.uk



TogetherNESS is an NHS team offering evidence-based learning focused on specialist areas of psychology

National Year of Reading

The National Literacy Trust have an offer for schools and early years setting for the [National Year of Reading 2026](#) and the [Go All In](#) campaign. Their aim for 2026 is to reimagine reading and (re)engage with reading in all its forms.

BookTrust Storytime

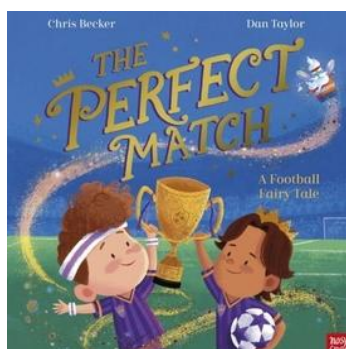
2027 Longlist



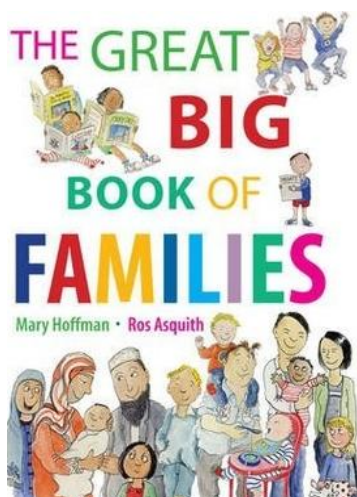

The grid contains the following book covers (from top-left to bottom-right):

- THE WONDERFUL WAYS TO MOVE
- BALLOON'S BIG ADVENTURE
- BEAR'S NAP
- Calling All Bears!
- FEED YOUR MONSTER!
- FRANK BUTTERFLY
- FRANK THE PIZZA
- HOW TO FIND A YETI
- I am the Moon
- MARCHING BAND
- Oh Dear, Look What I Got!
- PRIYA MISTRY
- RESCUE CREW
- SQUISH!
- TAKING THE LONG WAY HOME
- The Great Unicorn Rescue
- TURTLE WHO TURNED THE TIDE
- TINY TIGER SAYS Why Can't I?
- Were Going on a DINO HUNT!
- When I am KIND
- WRONG TIME ROOSTER

The Book Trust have a competition to win all of these enter by 25 June: [Win all the books on the BookTrust Storytime Prize 2027... | BookTrust](#)



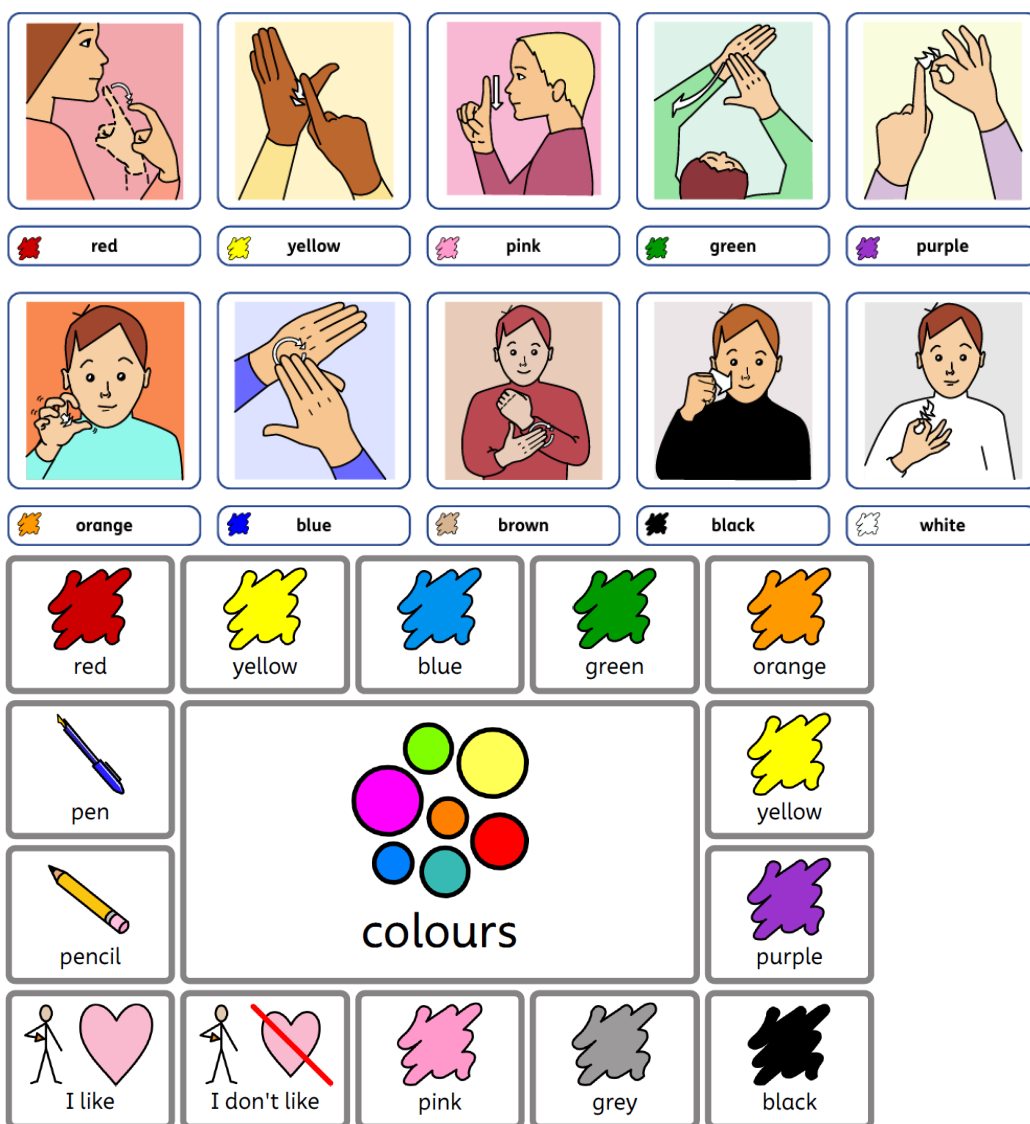
[The Perfect Match: A Football Fairy Tale | BookTrust](#)



[The Great Big Book of Families | BookTrust](#)

Signs and Symbols of the Month

Using the Makaton signs alongside speech, gestures and symbols promotes communication on every level for every child (not just SEND). Part of your language rich interactions and communication environment.



BFfC training and network offer:

- **Makaton 1 Day Course - £60pp**
22 June, 9am-4.30pm. Civic Centre
Book on via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)
- **Sensory Training – Food sensitivities, Emma Patey, RISE team – Free**
23 June, 9.30-11am. Civic Centre
Book on via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

BFfC training and network offer:

- **Trauma Virtual Reality Programme – Free**
26 June, 10am-12pm (Fully booked)
10 July, 10am-12pm, Civic Centre
Book on via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)
- **Big Feelings, Little People – Free**
30 June, 9.30am-12pm, Civic Centre

Book on via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

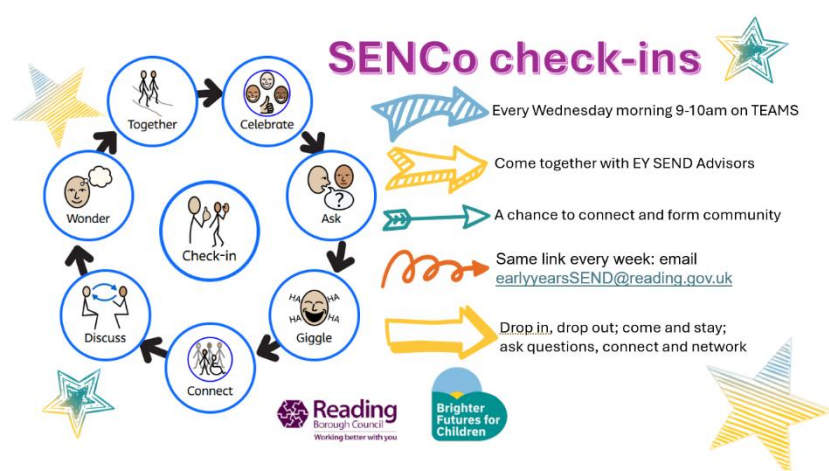
Specialist Advisory Support

EY SEND Referrals

We have made some changes to how EY SEND referrals are processed, and these will be discussed at a triage meeting. Please ensure you send referrals to EarlyyearsSEND@reading.gov.uk and they will be reviewed by the Senior Early Years SEND Advisors and allocated to a member of the team or added to the waiting list.

- **Weekly SENCO Check-ins**

Every Wednesday morning, 9-10am. Join using [this link](#).



- **SEND Advisory Support**

Call back service. [Request a call](#) from a SEND advisor

- **Speech and Language (SALT) Surgery**

Third Thursday of the month. [Book a slot](#)

- **Early Years and Childcare Advisory Support**

[Book dedicated time](#) with a member of the team.

For full details of the support offered by the team please refer to our [training programme](#).

Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs

Family Hubs provide a wide range of services by connecting families with their community and local support networks. You can view the full timetable of Hub activities here. [Reading Directory | Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs](#).

Early Years Funding Support, Starting School Champions and SEND Advisors in the Family Hubs

The Early Years team run drop-in sessions in the family hubs on a fortnightly basis to support families with:

Early Years Child Development and Starting School

A drop-in for advice about your child's development and their next step - if you have any concerns about special Educational Needs or information about how to support your child before starting school. You will be able to speak to our Early Years and Starting School Champion or our Early Years SEND advisory team to receive personalised advice for your child's next steps.

Check your eligibility for funded childcare

A drop-in session to support you with making an application for the Funded Early Learning for 2-year-olds and signpost to other childcare services.

The drop-in will give you the opportunity to:

- Discuss your childcare funding options with the team
- Receive support/guidance to apply for the funded Early Learning for 2-year-olds and check your eligibility
- Signposting to the Working Family 30-hour entitlement
- Further information on childcare/support services through the Family Information Service

If any of your families require support in the above areas, please direct them to the hubs where the team will be happy to meet with them.

South Reading: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month, 9.30-11.30am

East & North: 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, 9.30-11.30am

Ranikhet: 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, 9.30-11.30am

Southcote: 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the months, 1-3pm

Best Start in Life Parent Hub

This online resource provides parents and carers with trusted information, practical guidance, and support to help children thrive from pregnancy through the early years. Directing families to this site will ensure they can easily access high quality advice and local services tailored to their needs [Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life](#).

Training

The Early Years, childcare and SEND summer term training programmes are now available on our website.

- [PVI's, Schools and Maintained Nursery schools](#)
- [Childminders](#)
- [Wraparound providers](#)

NEN (Neuroinclusive Education Network) Developing Toileting in the Early Years

This module is aimed at all education professionals working in the Early Years, it is intended to develop your understanding of how autism can impact on toileting. The module also aims to equip you with strategies to enable and support children who may be autistic to develop their toileting in the setting and at home, through effective communication with parents and carers.

Date: Friday 26 June

Time: 1-3.30pm

Location: Civic Centre

Cost: Free

Please book by emailing earlyyearssend@reading.gov.uk

***NEW DATE* Wraparound & Holiday Activity Learning Workshops**

We are delighted to share the rescheduled date for our upcoming **Wraparound & Holiday Activity Learning Workshop!**

We have moved this session to a new date to ensure as many of our fantastic providers can attend as possible. To mark the occasion, we also want to turn this workshop into an **end-of-year celebration** to highlight and celebrate all the amazing work, dedication, and achievements you have accomplished across your settings this past year. This outdoor physical workshop is designed to develop practitioners' confidence and skills in delivering both indoor and outdoor group games.

The workshop aims to:

- Develop practical skills
- Build a toolbox of engaging activities
- Improve quality
- Empower
- Network with fellow providers



Date: Wednesday 8 July 2026



Location: The Ranger Station, Prospect Park, Reading, RG30 2ND



Time: 9.30-11.30am

£ Price: FREE (Please note: a £20 per person charge applies for non-attendance without prior notice)

You can [book here](#) or [email](#) to secure your place!

Dingley's Promise Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Training – Inclusive Practice

There is **limited time remaining** to sign up for free access to this training programme. To receive access, registration must be completed by the end of June 2026. This will provide access to all courses until the end of December 2026.

This training is funded by the Comic Relief Changemakers programme and aims to support and embed inclusive practice within early years settings.

The programme includes the following courses:

- Introduction to Early Years Inclusive Practice
- Early Years SEND Transition Training Course
- Behaviours That Challenge Training Course
- Intersections Within Early Years Practice Training Course
- Having Difficult Conversations With Families Training Course
- The Voice of the Child Training Course
- Leadership and Management for Inclusion Training Course
- An Inclusive Approach to Early Years Curriculum and Assessment Training Course

- Supporting Communication Development for Early Years Children with SEND Training Course
- Creating Inclusive Environments

Please follow this link to sign up [Training - Dingley's Promise](#)

Outdoor Learning and play training for Reading Primary Schools

Fully funded training (funded by Reading Borough Council's small grants fund) to support children's social, emotional and mental health through outdoor learning for Reading primary school staff.

Date: Tuesday 30 June

Time: 9.30am – 12.30pm

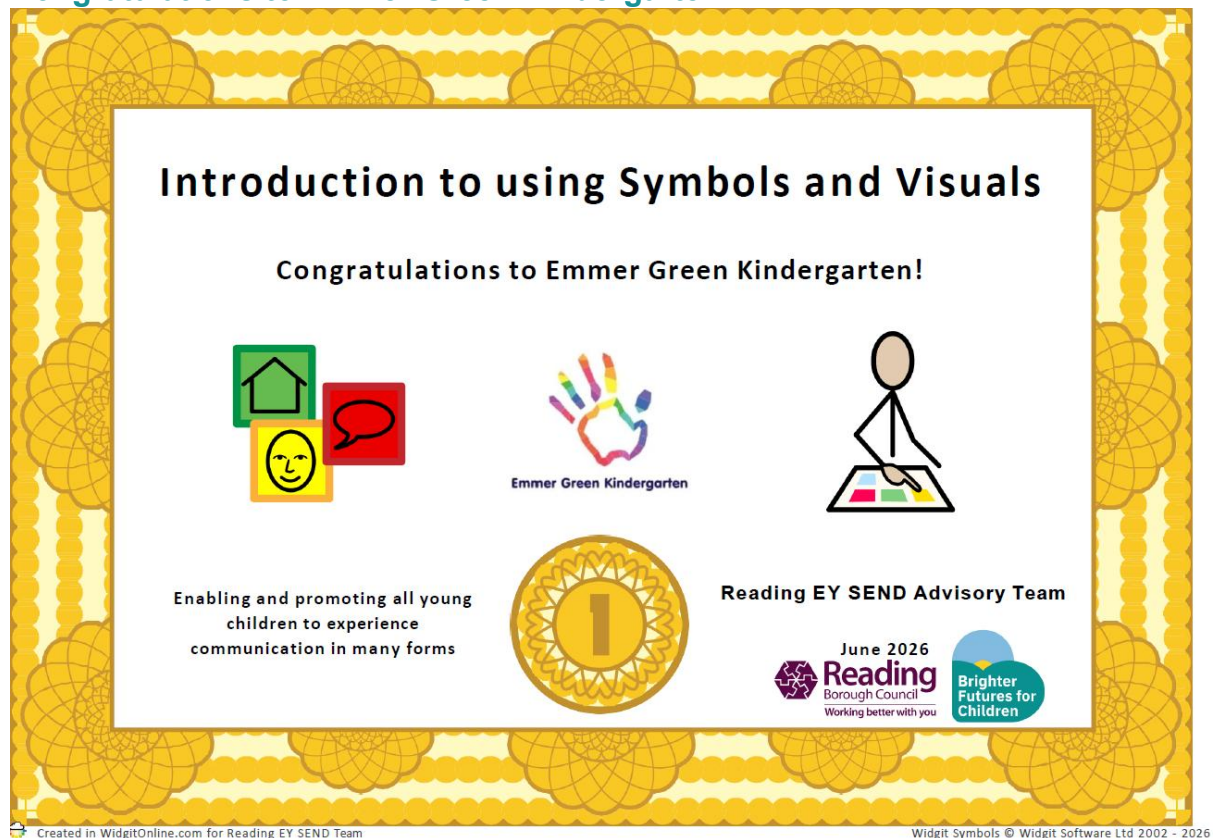
Location: 89th Reading Scout Hall, Emmer Green

Learn how to set up and create outdoor learning and play opportunities that empower children's social and emotional skills and mental health.

A practical workshop to build staff confidence, knowledge and skills in embedding high quality outdoor provision. For further information and to book on [Click Here](#).

Compliments/Celebrations

Congratulations to Emmer Green Kindergarten!



Your contributions

Is there something you are particularly proud of that has been achieved by staff or the children in your setting? Do you have a team member that is celebrating long service or achieved a new qualification that deserves a shout out? Please share these with us so that we can share your news with the sector!!

Email: earlyyears@reading.gov.uk.

Previous updates can be found on our [website](#).

Kind regards

Early Years, Childcare and SEND Team | Directorate of Children's Services

Reading Borough Council
Civic Centre
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

earlyyears@reading.gov.uk

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [X](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

