

East Midlands Regional Reading Group Network

Books Connect

What are public libraries doing for reading groups in the East Midlands?

Whatever type of reader you are, and wherever you want to meet up with other readers, we can help you in a variety of ways.

Our minimum offer to reading groups includes an advice and referral service to put you in touch with existing reading groups or to help you set up your own. Your local library staff can help by providing a starter pack of information about reading groups and will recommend books for your group. You will also be advised about possible venues for meeting and shown online reader resources. Some libraries provide collections of books for reading groups to use.

As we have developed services, provision across the region has expanded, widening access, to support reading groups for adult learners, teenagers, children, families, visually impaired, people with mental health issues, and older people in residential homes - with reading groups adapted to their particular needs. Between 2005 and 2007 there has been a 77% rise in the number of groups in the region, and it continues to rise.

Each local authority consults with communities to provide reading groups in response to local demand, often working with partners such as Age Concern, Youth Service, Primary Health Care Trusts, Adult Education Centres, Adult Social Services and Children's Centres.

A whole range of creative activity is offered to readers and reading groups, including author talks, Readers' Days, and storytelling. A book and a film are now being produced. Both these are based on stories, reading groups and reading experiences, and will celebrate the wide range of readers and their views across the East Midlands.

By working together regionally, the 9 public library authorities in the East Midlands have taken part in a unique initiative – a reading groups pilot project, which provides a national standard for the future.

The project is being evaluated, by both library staff, partners and readers themselves, so that we can show how library services in the East Midlands have improved their support for reading groups and help them to plan effectively and creatively for their future.