

# Reading Friends Business Development Brief Subscription Modelling

The Reading Agency  
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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

**THE  
READING  
AGENCY**

Registered charity number 1085443 (England and Wales)

# Context and overview

## **Purpose of the tender**

The Reading Agency requires consultancy support to develop a subscription framework for our Reading Friends programme. We require strong business development acumen, financial skills, and experience of subscription modelling to help us deliver and implement a sustainable subscription approach to take this important programme forward beyond its current funding.

## **The Reading Agency**

### **Our mission and vision**

We are a charity whose mission is to tackle life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. Our vision is for a world where everyone is reading their way to a better life. [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

### **Reading Friends**

Reading Friends connects older people to reduce loneliness and isolation by using reading – in any form – to start conversations. The programme is UK-wide and delivered locally by public libraries, community and voluntary sector organisations. See appendix for the Reading Friends programme timetable. [www.readingfriends.org.uk](http://www.readingfriends.org.uk)

### **Sustainability planning**

Reading Friends is a flagship Reading Agency programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund through an award of £2.1 million over four years, from 2016-2020. We want to develop a business plan that will sustain activity at a local and national level beyond the current funded period.

As part of our commitment to a long-term vision for Reading Friends, we commissioned a sustainability review to explore potential business models to take the programme forward post funding.

The review identified a number of possible business modelling options that we would now like to develop and test. Our first priority is the development of a subscription model, which may be tiered in order to meet the needs of different partners, ranging from public libraries and community sector organisations to care homes and prisons.

We are currently piloting this on a small scale with two regional clusters of public library authorities in the East Midlands and London. This has allowed us to extend the number of library authorities involved in Reading Friends and has provided a new income stream for the programme. Pricing of this model has been set deliberately low to allow us to test and snag the model with the authorities involved. The pilot launched in May 2019 and will run for one year with regular review and feedback during this period.

## The brief

- To review the learning from the existing subscription pilot, and other sources, including The Reading Agency's original business development mapping review.
- To use this learning to develop a fully costed subscription model and the required delivery platform and framework ready for launch in October 2019.
- To create a supporting business plan for this model identifying potential markets, key partners and stakeholders, and short and long-term income projections and targets.
- To consult with and build support for the model with key stakeholders and partners.

### Scope of work

This contract is to develop and implement a Reading Friends subscription model, building on learning from the current pilot with public libraries. The consultant will work with the Reading Friends team and other Reading Agency staff including the Finance, Commercial and Business Director and consult with key stakeholders in order to deliver this task.

The contract will be managed by the Reading Friends Senior Programme Manager with input from the Finance, Commercial and Business Director.

The consultant will need to:

- Review learning from the existing pilot model and from previous subscription model mapping work commissioned by The Reading Agency.
- Scope the framework for a partnership subscription model, which will include assessing the market value of existing and potential assets, identify any premium assets not currently part of the offer and pricing levels in line with market tolerance.
- Test the acceptability of the model with key potential stakeholders.
- Scope the framework for delivery, including digital delivery requirements and the staffing capacity.
- Create appropriate partnership agreement templates and sign up requirements.
- Support the development of key marketing messages, communications and approaches.
- Scope a supporting business plan identifying projected income targets in the short term (one year) and beyond (three years).

We would also like support with the set-up of the model but recognise that this might require different skills and that not all consultants may want to include this in their tender, reducing the budget accordingly.

We envisage the work plan for this contract will include:

- August – September 2019: Research into the development of an appropriate subscription model, including an assessment of the value of assets and the modelling of a pricing structure. This phase will include consultation with key internal and external stakeholders regarding the acceptability of the approach.
- September – October 2019: Delivery and agreement of recommendations.
- October – November 2019: Set up and implementation of the model.

This schedule is subject to review.

### **Required outcomes**

- A report outlining the findings from the research phase.
- Recommendations and an outline delivery framework for a fully costed Reading Friends subscription model including partnership agreement templates and key marketing messages.
- A business plan for the model identifying expected income and expenditure for up to three years.
- Set up of the agreed delivery framework ready for market launch.

### **Budget**

- The total budget for this contract is up to £20,000 for all aspects of the brief including VAT.
- This budget includes all expenses.

### **Duration of contract**

This contract is for up to 6 months from August 2019 with a final schedule to be agreed on appointment and key deliverables as set out above.

## Responding to the brief

We would like you to provide us with a detailed CV, outlining your relevant experience for this work and a Word or PowerPoint document setting out:

- Your proposed approach to the project.
- Your key achievements in relation to developing subscription business models for social change projects or similar.
- What you think the key considerations and challenges will be for developing and implementing this model for Reading Friends.

Project costs should be itemised under the following headings:

- Day rate and anticipated number of days required
- Any administrative costs
- Consultation/site visit costs
- Travel and subsistence
- Overheads (if applicable)

Costs should be inclusive of VAT and state whether VAT is chargeable. Tenders should set out a payment schedule related to key milestones.

### **Timetable/milestones**

- Thursday 1 August 5.00 pm - deadline for proposals
- Monday 12 August - interviews
- Wednesday 14 August – successful tenderer appointed
- Monday 19 August – consultancy commences/briefing meetings

### **Tender delivery method**

Please send your tender via email to [recruitment@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@readingagency.org.uk) no later than 5.00 pm on Thursday 1 August.

### **Contact information**

If you have any queries about the brief, please email Debbie Giwa ([debbie.giwa@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:debbie.giwa@readingagency.org.uk)) and we can arrange a time to speak.

## Appendix

### Reading Friends programme timetable

The programme funding commenced in September 2016 and we are currently in the pilot phase, preparing for the rollout year. Below is a summary of the programme phasing:

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Project activities</b>
September 2016 - June 2017	Planning and set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-creation of materials and approach</li><li>• Selection of test projects</li></ul>
June 2017- August 2018	Testing and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Testing Reading Friends concept in six sites in England, Scotland and Wales, each with bespoke approaches for their audiences</li></ul>
September 2018-August 2019	Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pilot of selected approaches from test projects in 10 sites across UK</li></ul>
September 2019-August 2020	Roll out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roll out of Reading Friends programme – possibly with 20 projects although this may be wider depending on demand in the sector</li></ul>