

Birmingham Literacy Business Pledge

If every child left primary school with the required reading skills, the UK economy could be £32.1 billion bigger by 2025¹. By improving literacy in Birmingham, businesses can strengthen their workforce and improve economic productivity in the city.

50% of wards in Birmingham rank in the top 10% of literacy need in England² and 41% of young people in Birmingham did not achieve good GCSE grades in English language and maths in 2018³. As the UK prepares to leave the European Union, these skills will become more important as we forge new economic alliances in a competitive global market.

What is our vision for Birmingham?

The National Literacy Trust, in partnership with the University of Birmingham, recently launched **Birmingham Stories**, a ten-year campaign to spread a love of storytelling across the city and to equip children, young people and adults with the literacy skills they need to succeed in life. Research is integral to the campaign as activity will be built on the findings of University of Birmingham researchers and there will be continuous evaluation of our programmes.

Birmingham Stories is working in partnership with local schools, young people, businesses and cultural organisations on a series of engaging programmes and public events to raise awareness of the importance of storytelling and literacy at every stage of life. With your help, we can extend the reach of the campaign to benefit more children and families across the city.



Now in its fourth year, this national initiative led by the National Literacy Trust calls on UK businesses to help close the nation's literacy gap and boost social mobility.

74 businesses signed up in 2019, including Amazon, Facebook, KPMG, McDonald's and the Premier League. By supporting Birmingham Stories, you could also join the national pledge.

The need



50% of wards in Birmingham rank in the **top 10% of literacy need** in England



29% of pupils in Birmingham left primary school **unable to read at the expected level** for their age



41% of young people in Birmingham did **not achieve good GCSE grades** in English language and maths



16% of working age residents living in Birmingham have **no formal qualifications** – twice as high as the national average (8%), and **more than any other city in the country**

How can you support Birmingham Stories?

Pledge area	Action
Engage our employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer with Words for Work, a primary and secondary literacy programme. Open your doors to young people, giving them the literacy and communication skills they need to reach their potential • Raise awareness of the importance of reading for enjoyment within your workplace e.g. communal book spaces • Volunteer as a Literacy Champion. Team up with student volunteers from the University of Birmingham to inspire storytelling across the city
Raise literacy levels in our local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer bursaries to local schools to attend National Literacy Trust training, helping embed sustainable change across settings • Offer funding to support the expansion of our local work, so we can work with more schools, adults and families
Contribute to the local campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an advocate for Birmingham Stories. Share leaflets, information and key messages through your communication channels to a range of audiences. • Hold a workplace fundraising event to raise money and awareness of Birmingham Stories • Host Birmingham Stories events

For more information about the Birmingham Literacy Business Pledge, please contact the **Birmingham Stories Hub Manager Hari** on: harinder.matharu@literacytrust.org.uk.

By taking action, you will be recognised on the Birmingham Stories website, featured in key communications and have access to local data around literacy need to help you target your work.

1 Read On. Get On. (2014) How reading can help children escape poverty. Published by Save the Children on behalf of the Read On. Get On. campaign

2 National Literacy Trust and Experian (2017) <https://literacytrust.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/all-party-parliamentary-group-literacy/literacy-score-mapping-literacy-need-across-england/>

3 Department for Education (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-results-2017-to-2018-provisional>