



New research shows that supporting children's reading outside of school could lead to £4.6 billion boost to UK's GDP

- *If all children in the UK read for pleasure daily, the number achieving five good GCSEs could increase by 1.1 million in 30 years*
- *This would boost lifetime earnings of the individuals by £57,500 and lead to an economic impact of up to £4.6 billion to the UK's GDP each year*
- *The report comes as the National Literacy Trust records an increase in reading for pleasure: 1 in 2 children and young people say they enjoy reading – up from January 2020, when the charity saw lowest-ever levels*

New research by WPI Strategy for British Land and the National Literacy Trust demonstrates the economic value of reading for pleasure for the first time.

If all school-age children in the UK read for pleasure every day, WPI modelling* shows the number getting five good GCSEs by the age of 16 could increase by 1.1 million within 30 years. Using Department for Education research that looks at GCSE results, productivity and higher earnings, WPI found that this would boost their average lifetime earning potential by £57,500.

What's more, the analysis shows that after 30 years, this reading for pleasure shift could add as much as £4.6 billion a year to the UK's GDP.

The research was commissioned to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of British Land's partnership with the National Literacy Trust. Over the last decade, the property company has supported the charity's Young Readers Programme, inspired over 55,000 children from the UK's most disadvantaged communities to engage in reading and helped distribute over 167,000 books.

After recording the lowest level of reading enjoyment (47.8%) for 15 years in 2020, the National Literacy Trust reported** a small increase in enjoyment levels in 2021, with 1 in 2 (51.5%) enjoying reading.

The latest research from the charity shows just 3 in 10 (30.1%) of children and young people read something outside of school every day – showing the considerable gap between the current state of the nation and the almost daily reading required to reach WPI modelling estimates.

The charity also found that the last year had a particularly detrimental impact on the daily reading levels of boys who receive free school meals, with a drop of 5.7 percentage points in the number of boys on free school meals who read every day in their free time.

Simon Carter, Chief Executive of British Land says:

“Today’s research shows how we all stand to gain from nurturing our youngest generation’s learning and literacy. Our partnership with the National Literacy Trust is the longest partnership between a business and a charity to improve literacy in the UK, and is testament to how collaboration between charities, businesses and communities can transform educational outcomes. We hope the report inspires many more cross-sector partnerships that unlock the tremendous potential of reading for pleasure – now we have clear evidence of how it can improve children’s life chances, earnings and the overall GDP of the country.”

Cressida Cowell, Waterstone’s Children’s Laureate says:

“Today’s research demonstrates the huge value of reading enjoyment. Supporting a child’s reading not only boosts their individual life circumstances – it can change our entire country’s economic prospects.

“The importance of supporting this behaviour cannot be underestimated.”

Jonathan Douglas CBE, Chief Executive of the National Literacy Trust says:

“At the National Literacy Trust, we have always known that reading for pleasure changes lives. Now, for the first time, we can see the significant economic impact of supporting a love of books outside of the classroom.

“Unfortunately, there are so many barriers that prevent children from developing a motivation to read – including access to reading materials, confidence, and children never connecting with a book.

“Collaborations between the charity and corporate sector are key to supporting initiatives that encourage positive reading behaviours. We are so grateful for British Land’s support over the last ten years and look forward to reaching many more milestones together.”

To read more about the British Land report, The power of reading for pleasure, please visit: www.Britishland.com/NLT.

To find out more information about the National Literacy Trust’s reading research, visit: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-engagement-in-2021>.

.

ENDS

For further information or to request a spokesperson interview, please contact:

- Celia Silvani, Media and Communications Manager at the National Literacy Trust, on celia.silvani@literacytrust.org.uk, or 07714 389440 (out of hours)

Notes to editors

*The power of reading for pleasure, WPI Strategy and British Land

** Children and young people’s reading in 2021: Emerging insight into the impact of the pandemic on reading, National Literacy Trust

About the National Literacy Trust

Our mission is to improve the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of those who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in school, work and life. We run Literacy Hubs and campaigns in communities where low levels of literacy and social mobility are seriously impacting people's lives. We support schools and early years settings to deliver outstanding literacy provision, and we campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents.

Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions. Literacy is a vital element of action against poverty and our work changes children and young people's life stories. Our new site Words for Life provides simple, fun and educational activities for children and young people aged 0-24 to support learning at home and help them feel more confident.

Visit literacytrust.org.uk to find out more, donate or sign up for our free email newsletter. You can also find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The National Literacy Trust is a registered charity no. 1116260 and a company limited by guarantee no. 5836486 registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in Scotland no. SC042944. Registered address: 68 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL.

About British Land

Our portfolio of high-quality UK commercial property is focused on London Campuses and Retail & Fulfilment assets throughout the UK. We own or manage a portfolio valued at £12.7bn (British Land share: £9.1bn) as at 31 March 2021 making us one of Europe's largest listed real estate investment companies.

We create Places People Prefer, delivering the best, most sustainable places for our customers and communities. Our strategy is to leverage our best-in-class platform and proven expertise in development, repositioning and active management, investing behind two key themes: Campuses and Retail & Fulfilment.

Our three Campuses at Broadgate, Paddington Central and Regent's Place are dynamic neighbourhoods, attracting growth customers and sectors, and offering some of the best connected, highest quality and most sustainable space in London. We are delivering our fourth campus at Canada Water, where we have planning consent to deliver 5 million sq ft of residential, commercial, retail and community space over 53 acres. Our campuses account for 70% of our portfolio. Retail & Fulfilment accounts for 25% of the portfolio and is focused on retail parks which are aligned to the growth of convenience, online and last mile fulfilment. We are complementing this with urban logistics primarily in London, focused on development-led opportunities.

Sustainability is embedded throughout our business. In 2020, we set out our sustainability strategy which focuses on two time-critical areas where British Land can create the most benefit: making our whole portfolio net zero carbon by 2030 and partnering to grow social value and wellbeing in the communities where we operate.

Further details can be found on the British Land website at www.britishland.com.