

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
9 JUNE 2010**

**SUBJECT: SCOTTISH BOOK TRUST: EARLY YEARS BOOK GIFTING  
PROGRAMME**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 Committee is invited to note the Early Years Book Gifting Programme which replaces the Bookstart initiative.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D(21) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the statutory duty of the Council to deal with matters relating to the provision of library and information services.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **That in considering the Early Years Book Gifting Programme, Committee notes:**
- a) **that this 4 stage Bookbug programme focused on Scottish needs replaces the Bookstart initiative;**
  - b) **that this essential programme has a vital role to play in children's lives in the 0-5 age group and in supporting parents and carers;**
  - c) **that this programme directly addresses key national and local priorities, particularly early intervention and giving children the best possible start in life;**
  - d) **that this programme will be delivered through an effective partnership involving libraries, the education service and the health service.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The child who from the earliest age is read to, introduced to books, rhymes and stories is the child who will want to learn to read and moreover is the child who will enjoy reading. Research has identified that babies and toddlers who are not introduced to storytelling, books, rhymes from an early age are at a marked disadvantage in their learning by the time they go to school. The significant rate of poor literacy levels in Scotland, apart from disadvantaging the individuals concerned, has a negative effect on Scotland's economic performance. Hence the need to address social and economic disadvantage and support the securing of an essential and enjoyable lifelong skill through a nationally co-ordinated and funded earliest intervention reading initiative. It aims to complement and support the Curriculum for Excellence by creating successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors through rich, varied and supportive reading experiences.

- 3.2 Scottish Book Trust's Early Years Programme which replaces Bookstart in Scotland provides essential support to parents and encourages them to share books with their children right from the start. It is delivered in partnership with all local authority library, education services and NHS boards.
- 3.3 The programme will be promoted to parents and children under the Bookbug mascot and co-ordinated by the libraries service.
- 3.4 There are four coherent and progressive book gifting stages for children from birth to primary 1, mainly:
- Baby Pack, gifted to families when children are between 6-16 weeks old. Delivery is primarily via Health Visitors.
  - Toddler Pack, gifted to families when children are between 12-24 months old. Delivery is primarily via Health Visitors.
  - Pirate Pack gifted to families when children are at the nursery school stage. Delivery is primarily via the nurseries.
  - P1 Book, gifted in November to children in their P1 year. Delivery is via the schools.
- 3.5 Packs contain a canvas bag with parents' book sharing guides, posters appropriate to the age and a message to parents about the benefits of sharing books with young children. Together with information about joining the library and library services these offer excellent support to parents and children. The programme therefore involves c.4,000 young people each year in Moray.
- 3.6 The Bookbug initiative will be promoted by Book Trust Scotland via television advertising following the national launch on 30 June. The Moray launch at Elgin Library will take place on 1 July and be supported by Book Trust Scotland. The launch will involve key partners, parents and carers, babies and toddlers and a Rhymetime session. Rhymetime sessions regularly attract 80 parents, carers and babies. On an ongoing basis the programme will be supported by a range of materials supplied by the Scottish Book Trust, a dedicated Early Years section on the Scottish Book trust website, regular newsletters for practitioners, partners and families and support at Book Festivals. The libraries service will promote the initiative through its leaflets, outreach activities, website, library open days and Get Moray Reading Book Festival from 15-18 September. In addition the libraries service will promote the initiative through its storytime and rhymetime activities.
- 3.7 Scottish Book Trust will provide free of charge a high quality early years library joining scheme called Bookbugs Library Challenge. The scheme will consist of advertising posters, flyers, collectors cards and illustrated certificates for families to collect. This initiative will complement the libraries service's existing programmes and provide an added focus to promoting the essential benefits of reading.
- 3.8 The Scottish Book Trust will offer training and information seminars. It should be noted that helpful though this training might be there is already a high level

of expertise within the libraries and education services and that indeed storytimes and rhymetimes and outreach support to family groups etc has been well established practice for many years.

- 3.9 The current uptake of the Bookstart scheme is 90%. Given the Scottish focus within the Bookbug scheme, the enhanced publicity programmes and materials and the support from the Scottish Government, this new scheme should be more effective in reaching more children and families and in leading to improved reading standards and attainment levels in later years, apart from creating a genuine love of reading as a pleasurable and essential activity throughout life. The network of libraries within Moray, the existing co-operative partnerships and the co-ordination of the programme through the post of Senior Librarian, Forres, should further strengthen its success while ensuring it can be delivered in an economic and effective manner.
- 3.10 Given the importance of this scheme in addressing key early years priorities and in supporting literacy, numeracy and the Curriculum for Excellence the Council has entered a formal agreement with the Scottish Book Trust to deliver the Bookbug programmes.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan**

The Bookbug Early Years Book Gifting Programme as a universal early intervention programme underpins national outcome 4, local priority 5 Attainment and Achievement, national outcome 5, local priority 6 Young People (Early Years) and national outcome 8, local priority 6 Young People.

It is a key element in the national Early Years Framework which seeks to empower parents to achieve better outcomes for themselves and their children.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

Section 163(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 places a duty on local authorities to make adequate provision of library services. Under PLQIM (the Public Libraries Quality Improvement Matrix for Scotland) support for the Bookbug scheme would be identified as essential provision in meeting intended outcomes.

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

**i. Finance**

The costs of co-ordination can be met from existing resources. The cost of delivery for the nursery scheme at £750 is met from the Pre School Education budget and requires to be maintained.

The other deliveries are absorbed within existing libraries and school delivery arrangements.

ii. Risks

Should this scheme not be supported the libraries service would be failing in its statutory obligations. Crucially, the Council would be failing to deliver on core priorities.

iii. Staffing

There are no additional staffing implications. Following the deletion of the post of Principal Librarian (Young People's Services) this essential scheme is now managed within the remit of the Senior Librarian, Forres. It should be noted that the collation of pack materials depends to a considerable extent on the excellent input of library volunteers.

iv. Property

There are no property implications.

**(d) Consultations**

The Educational Services Senior Management Team has been consulted and supports the recommendations within the report.

Sheens Duffus, Quality Improvement Officer in charge of Early Years Services has been consulted in respect of the delivery arrangements and effectiveness of the proposed programme.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 That the Committee considers the recommendations in respect of the Bookbug Early Years Book Gifting Scheme.**

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Book Gifting Programme