

Meeting: Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

Date: 1 October 2019

Title: Bookstart Partnership Agreement 2019-22

Author: Rachel Warkcup, Team Leader Tel: 0191 6437410
Cultural Services

Service: Environment Housing and Leisure

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee, with an overview of the Bookstart Partnership Agreement 2019-22 and the delivery of the programme in North Tyneside. The presentation will give an overview of the programme with an assessment of the likely impact upon and benefits for North Tyneside.

2. Recommendations

The Sub-Committee is invited to note the information in the report and outlined in the presentation.

3. Details

3.1 Background

Bookstart was the world's first national book gifting programme, established in 1992. It is run by BookTrust, the largest reading charity in the UK. Bookstart gifts free books to every child at two key stages; 0-12 months and 3-4 years of age. It also gives additional support to targeted families, multilingual children and those with additional needs. Every year over 2.2 million books are gifted nationally.

Bookstart aims to promote and encourage families to share books, stories and rhymes at the earliest possible age. It is based on the premise that children who have an early introduction to books, and are read to every day, benefit educationally, culturally, socially and emotionally.

As a partnership between libraries, health and early year's practitioners Bookstart will:

- Ensure that every eligible child receives a Bookstart Baby pack by the age of 12 months and a Treasure gift by the time they are 4 years old;
- Ensure that parents/carers receive a friendly and effective message which conveys the benefits and joys of sharing books, stories and rhymes daily;
- Encourage families to join the library;
- Encourage families to access and engage with local services;

- Signpost and support parents and carers around their own literacy/numeracy and IT needs.

3.2 Bookstart in North Tyneside

In 2019 BookTrust introduced a 3 year Partnership Agreement to give more security for the programme and support long term planning. The Head of Environment, Housing & Leisure has signed off this agreement. Bookstart Quality Standards, a framework that offers a benchmark for best practice, defines the objectives of the programme and how the measures of success will be met.

In North Tyneside the baby packs are 'gifted' by health visitors at the 6-8 week contact. The pack includes two board books, a rhyme sheet and a booklet of tips and ideas for sharing books with children from a very young age. North Tyneside Libraries organise the delivery of the packs to the four health visitor bases and promote an awareness of the packs at the weekly Bookstart Rhymetime sessions held in libraries.

The Treasure envelope is gifted from Early Years or Childminder settings when a child is 3-4 years old. The packs are delivered in November each year, over a three week period. An additional resource is the newborn envelope, this is given out by health visitors and by staff registering births. It contains a booklet of black and white shapes to share with a new born baby and a congratulations card, giving information about the Bookstart packs.

Bookstart Corner is a targeted programme to support families that are either entitled to the free 2-year-old early education grant (around 670 in North Tyneside) or need additional help to develop a love of stories, books and rhymes. Aimed at families with children aged 12-30 months, it allows settings to offer intensive support for parents and carers so that they can share stories with their children with confidence. North Tyneside will now receive an annual allocation of 250 packs. Corner resources have been utilised by Riverside Ready for School Centre and the Health Visitor Service to use with targeted families.

The reach of the Baby Pack is currently at 66%. This figure is a result of rebalancing the number of packs which had remained ungifted as well as changes to the age at which the health visitors gift the pack. This situation is reflected nationally. This has been addressed with new mechanisms in place and the reach is climbing steadily, with an aim to reach the Quality Standard requirement of 95% by 2020. The Treasure pack continues to perform well, with the maximum reach for 2018/19.

The value of the total resource allocation of resources to North Tyneside is £94,392 annually (£283,176 over the 3 year plan).

3.3 Next Steps

The three year partnership agreement required the establishment of a North Tyneside Bookstart Steering Group. The first meeting was held in May 2019 with partners from the Health Visitor Team, Early Help & Prevention, Early Years Education and the Portage Team. This group will meet 6 monthly to share information, developments and review practice around Bookstart.

North Tyneside Libraries Bookstart Coordinator will continue to ensure the delivery of packs, collation of figures, and monitoring against the Quality Standards.