

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE: Education, Culture and Sport

DATE: 8 October 2009

LEAD OFFICER: Annette Bruton, Director, Education, Culture and Sport

AUTHOR OF BUSINESS CASE: Ann Stephen, Children's Services Librarian
Tel. 652504
E mail: AStephen@aberdeencity.gov.uk

TITLE OF BUSINESS CASE: Establishment of a Permanent Bookstart Co-ordinator Post within the Library Staff Structure

BUSINESS CASE NUMBER: ECS/09/028

PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CASE

To propose that a permanent Bookstart Co-ordinator post is established within the Library staff structure.

Surestart funding, which is specifically for 0-3 year olds, has been used since 2002 to support this post.

Surestart funding for an 18 hour per week Bookstart Co-ordinator post has been allocated for April 2009– March 2010.

The fixed term contract for the Bookstart Co-ordinator terminated on May 31 2009, and there is no-one currently undertaking this role.

Bookstart is the national, Government funded, baby book gifting scheme, a multi-agency, socially inclusive, partnership project involving library staff, health visitors and early years professionals.

The extended Bookstart programme, Bookstart Plus for 18 – 24 month children and Treasure Chests for 3 year olds was introduced in April 2007.

Bookstart helps raise performance, reduces inequality and will benefit the Council by –

- promoting partnership working to raise attainment and achieve results
- ensuring children, parents and carers are well informed and actively supported to achieve their full potential
- being socially inclusive, allowing children to share a better quality of life
- increasing opportunities for adults and their children/grandchildren to learn together through development of family learning initiatives

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee approve the following:

Additional resource(s) / change to structure required	Job title(s)	No of jobs
Establishment of permanent job	Bookstart Co-ordinator	1P/T 18 hours
Conversion of fixed term job to permanent status		
Creation of fixed term job		
Extension of fixed term job		
Dis-establishment of permanent job		
Change to Job Title	Former: Revised:	

BUSINESS CASE

- 1. With specific reference to anticipated outputs/outcomes, state how the recommendation(s) support corporate objectives e.g. Council's Policy Statement; Vision and Values; Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003; Community Plan; Transformation Programme etc.**

Bookstart will generate a culture of lifelong learning and increase economic well-being and opportunities for every child.

Bookstart will bring significant improvement in educational achievement, particularly literacy, by supporting parents as their children's first and most important educators, enabling them to pursue their own learning needs.

As an established early intervention programme, Bookstart is committed to the Curriculum for Excellence and contributes to the aim of improving the learning, attainment and achievement of children and young people.

This initiative supports the Council's vision in relation to valuing people- "people who live or work in Aberdeen will be well informed and actively supported to achieve their full potential"

Research initially conducted in Birmingham by Wade and Moore in the 1990s and more recently in 2005 by University of Surrey and in 2007 by Aberdeen University, has clearly demonstrated that Bookstart has a direct impact on the long term well-being and educational attainment of children.

Bookstart Children from the pilot project in Birmingham were shown to be clearly ahead in both literacy and numeracy when starting school and further research showed that this was maintained through key stage 1 when they did significantly better than their counterparts.

Research published in 2001, showed nationally, that Bookstart families had better book sharing skills. Parents read more to babies and young children, were more likely to join the library, were more confident with regard to reading to their children and more aware of the role of reading in speech and language development.

“Planting a Seed for Life” (University of Surrey, 2005) demonstrated how regular reading with babies and toddlers had a positive effect on literacy development, due mainly to the fact that the programme is home based and directed by a parent. Evaluation of the Sighthill, Edinburgh research project by Aberdeen University showed that Bookstart encouraged parents to read to their children. The parents also agreed that sharing books from an early age helped to develop their child’s vocabulary, with Bookstart children becoming regular library users.

Positive research results support the Council’s objectives in terms of enhancing learning opportunities for children and young people and raising performance to a higher standard.

Bookstart supports the following Council Corporate Objectives-

- facilitates better communication between professionals and helps signpost opportunities for families requiring support in literacy and numeracy.
- depends on multi-agency partnership working
- enables a new generation to gain a love of books and reading and offers parents the opportunity to improve their own literacy skills,
- helps to prevent an intergenerational cycle of illiteracy and social exclusion.
- raises achievement of vulnerable children and closes the attainment gap,
- reaches parents in a non-discriminatory and non threatening way and encourages non-book families with low confidence and poor parental literacy skills to share books with their children.
- promotes and fosters early literacy in pre school children to ensure enjoyment of books and reading readiness when they start school and encourages lifelong library use by children and their families.

Corporate Plan

Bookstart supports the following aims

- To ensure that children and parents/carers are well informed, and actively supported to achieve their full potential
- To support and celebrate cultural diversity
- To achieve social inclusion to allow children to share a better quality of life

Integrated Children’s Services Plan

- Bookstart promotes integrated services which are accessible to all
- Bookstart helps raise attainment, reduces inequality and promotes partnership working to achieve results
- Bookstart promotes multi-agency working to achieve targets in order to deliver an improved, integrated service for Aberdeen’s children

2. State how the recommendation(s) support service objectives and plans and/or the achievement of a Statutory Performance Indicator.

This post will support communication and sharing of information with library staff and partners and promotion of Bookstart by means of a planned programme of outreach activities .

The project will also help to identify training opportunities for library and other Council staff eg Bookstart Rhymetimes.

Bookstart supports the development of library services for the 0-5 age group and promotes family literacy and increased library membership.

The evaluation and development of the Bookstart project in Aberdeen is rated annually against the National Bookstart Framework document with Aberdeen showing "Best Practice" in all elements of Bookstart delivery and outreach undertaken by the Bookstart Co-ordinator.

The early years literacy focus of the Bookstart programme is a high priority for the Council and the Library Service and is an integral part of the Children's Library Service development plans.

3. Outline why the new work cannot be undertaken within existing staff resources e.g. by re-distributing resources or curtailing lower priority services.

Bookstart is a National project. Although it is discretionary, it is supported by Government. Scottish Book Trust was given responsibility for early years book gifting in Scotland by the Scottish Government in April 2009. The external Surestart funding is awarded specifically for the purpose of employing a Bookstart Co-ordinator and due to the outreach remit of the post there is no scope for existing staff to undertake this work within the demands of their current role.

The post is vital in ensuring continuity and continuing success of this programme .

4. Risk Management: What are the consequences of not proceeding with the recommendation(s)?

- Bookstart Aberdeen would be rated in the "At Risk" category in the Bookstart Framework annual assessment instead of our current "Best Practice " rating
- Failure of the Library & Information, Health and Education Services to uphold the signed partnership agreement with Scottish Booktrust .
- Local Surestart funding to support the Bookstart Co-ordinator Post would have to be returned
- Bookstart awareness across the city would be seriously impaired.
- Co-ordinating the delivery of packs to partner organisations would have to be undertaken by existing staff who are already fully committed to frontline services, making it extremely difficult to target "hard to reach" families
- Inability to conduct outreach activities and maintain regular contact and communication with partner organisations.
- Library & Information Services would be unable to fulfil the increasing expectations from the Bookstart Development Manager for Scotland to demonstrate continuing improved performance statistics
- Library use and membership performance indicators for the pre- school age group and their families would be adversely affected as a result of lack of dedicated time spent on outreach activities linked to Bookstart.

5. Risk Assessment: What Health and Safety considerations have been taken into account?

The Bookstart Co-ordinator post will be covered by the standard Health & Safety arrangements for all posts based within the Central library

6. Financial Implications:

Funding for the salary costs of the Bookstart Co-ordinator post is dependent on Surestart funding allocation for 2009-2010 which has now been approved.

There are no additional budget implications. The costs identified will be met from Surestart allocation on a year by year application basis.

Impact on current year's revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Bookstart Co-ordinator 18 hours per week	G9	£5417	£6096

*These figures are based on an appointment being made by <1 October date>. Minimum and maximum salary costs also include agreed allowances and 26.1% on costs.

Full year impact on revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Bookstart Co-ordinator	G9	£10,835	£12,192

*Minimum and maximum salary costs include agreed allowances and 26.1% on costs.

Source and amount of revenue/capital budget funding available:

Surestart is funding the Bookstart Co-ordinator Post

Amount of external monies available within the current financial year:

Total Government/ Publishers funding to provide Bookstart packs for Aberdeen 2008-2010 plus training and additional resources

£138, 585

It should be noted that exit costs in the form of a statutory redundancy payment may be applicable if the employee in post has over two years service. Any such payment would be based on age and length of service.

The Bookstart Co-ordinator's fixed term contract ended on 31 May 2009 with no-one currently undertaking the Bookstart Co-ordinator role.

Amount of external monies available in total:

Total Government/ Publishers funding to provide Bookstart packs for Aberdeen 2008-2010 plus training and additional resources

£138, 585

- 7. If the recommendation(s) relate to additional staffing, outline and justify the proposed contractual status of the new employee(s) i.e. 'permanent' or fixed term?**

It is proposed that the Bookstart Co-ordinator post will be a permanent post subject to annual funding allocation by Surestart via the Early Years Integration Group.

This post was previously filled on a fixed term basis, however, due to the length of time that this project has been in place it is proposed that a permanent post should be established.

It is proposed that the post will be advertised internally only and any resulting vacancy within the library service will not be filled in 2009/10 to mitigate against potential redundancies as a consequence of any future budget decisions.

- 8. If the recommendation(s) are funded on a time-limited basis from an external source, what is the likelihood of the project continuing beyond the term of funding?**

Government funding nationally for the Bookstart resources is secure until 2010 with the extended programme, Bookstart Plus and Treasure Chests having been introduced in April 2007. Scottish Book Trust was given responsibility for early years book gifting in Scotland by the Scottish Government in April 2009. As a result of a feasibility study undertaken by the at the request of the Scottish Government there are various improvements planned to the programme tailoring it specifically to the Scottish early years environment featuring Scottish authors and illustrators and linking in to Scottish educational and parenting strategies. Funding has been confirmed for 2010/11 by the Early years team at Scottish Book Trust and it is extremely likely to continue beyond 2011 given the success of the programme to date.

The post would cease to exist if funding is withdrawn.

- 9. If the project is likely to continue beyond the term of funding, what steps are being considered in order to finance this extension?**

Library & Information Services would not be able to fund the supply of Bookstart resources if Government support was withdrawn nor have the ability to deliver the Bookstart project from existing staff resources.

An application for further funding support from Surestart will be submitted early in 2010.

- 10. In the case of fixed term contracts, state whether this contract is task or event related; outline the proposed exit strategy and detail how potential exit costs will be met.**

- 11. What accommodation and equipment considerations have been taken into account?**

There is adequate accommodation and equipment within the Central Library for this post

12. Authorised Signature

Annette Bruton
Director, Education, Culture and Sport
abruton@aberdeencity.gov.uk
01224 814501

13. Report Author Details

Ann Stephen,
Children's Services Librarian
AnnStephen@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel 652504