

Education and Culture Committee
Scotland's Educational and Cultural Future
The Literature Forum for Scotland

March 2014

The Literature Forum for Scotland is the national advisory and consultative forum for Scotland's literature organisations, writers and related interests including publishing and languages. A full list of the members is appended (**Appendix 1**).

We submit that literature in all its aspects is vital to Scotland's Educational and Cultural Future, as set out in our ten year strategic vision 'Literature Nation', which is also appended (**Appendix 2**).

THEME 1

We welcome recent steps to improve the teaching of Scottish Literature and Culture in the schools system but submit that in Higher and Further Education there is a lack of overall co-ordination of Scottish cultural studies and so a failure to exploit the full international potential of these disciplines in research and teaching at the present time. International students are a vital part of this picture and it is essential that the potential to attract and retain international students is maximised as of cultural, educational and economic benefit to Scotland.

Within that wider field there is a specific need to provide Scottish Cultural studies input for teachers in Initial Teacher Education, and CPD programmes.

Vocational opportunities in arts and culture are growing in contemporary Scotland and both artistic practice and creative industries are set to become increasingly important for the workforce of the future. We welcome the ability of the committee to examine creative apprenticeships and internships in the cultural sector, and tertiary sector courses as a whole, to measure whether Scotland is aligned to take best advantage of the future opportunities.

It is our observation that relationships between the Enterprise Network, the cultural sector and Further/Higher Education are not yet as co-ordinated and productive as they might be in Scotland's best interests. This point also relates to your second Theme.

THEME 2

We note also the committee's interest in the future of Childcare. We submit that childcare is not the same as education and that the most important aspect of Early Years provision is high quality, appropriately staffed and creative education, which we see as fundamental to social and personal well-being, and to the confidence of future generations in tackling the challenges of adaptability and diversification. We note with concern the decline in the availability of teachers in Early Years classes , while also appreciating the role of other professionals, and submit that the quality of Childcare and educational provision are inextricably linked. To increase childcare at the expense of education would be a long-term strategic error.

We append information about Bookbug – Scottish Book Trust's Early Years Programme; and the Assertive Outreach Programme: Bookbug for the Home Evaluation: Executive Summary (**Appendix 3**).

Please also see our points above in relation to youth employment and the co-ordination of existing resources.

THEME 3

Whether within the existing constitutional position or a changed situation, a distinctive and strong Scottish Broadcasting sector is critical. It is our submission that current investment lags behind Scottish capacity and potential, in both broadcasting and the screen industries.

We also submit that the international success of Scotland's writers is not sufficiently reflected in the broadcast media, and that the complexities of the present commissioning systems do not favour a strategic exploitation of Scottish cultural resources and that a Scottish Broadcasting Commission would be better placed to address this. We also submit that a Scottish Broadcasting Commission would be better able to address the strategic role of Scotland's languages in national and regional culture.

As regards international cultural diplomacy, we believe that there is much goodwill evidenced by all the bodies involved including the British Council, Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government, but that there is no coherent strategy amongst these bodies for the longer term promotion of Scotland's cultural resources, and therefore an under exploitation of one of Scotland's most distinctive and vital assets. Scotland's writers and storytellers are in high demand internationally, but their multiple engagements are neither tracked nor strategically developed for the longer term.

There is also a relationship between the international promotion of Scotland to visitors and its cultural assets which should be strengthened in order that living culture is viewed alongside landscape, heritage and food and drink, as part of the all round contemporary experience of Scotland nationally and internationally.

Translation is also a vital part of this endeavour but again there is no co-ordinated initiative or support to ensure that Scottish writing features in other language domains, some of which have growing tourism potential.

**Donald Smith, Director, Scottish International Storytelling Festival
Convener, Education Group, Literature Forum for Scotland**

March 2014

Appended:

Appendix 1: Literature Forum for Scotland Membership

Appendix 2: 'Literature, Nation', October 2009

Appendix 3: Bookbug – Scottish Book Trust's Early Years Programme; and Assertive Outreach Programme: Bookbug for the Home Evaluation: Executive Summary

Appendix 1: Literature Forum for Scotland Membership

Association for Scottish Literary Studies
Association of Scottish Literary Agents
Book Nation/Borders Book Festival
CILIPS (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland)/SLIC (Scottish Libraries and Information Council)
Edinburgh International Book Festival
Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust
Dumfries & Galloway: Literature Development Officer
The Gaelic Books Council
Moniack Mhor
National Library of Scotland
Playwrights' Studio Scotland
Publishing Scotland
The Saltire Society
Scots Language Centre
Scottish Book Trust
Scottish Language Dictionaries
SLAM (Scottish Literary and Arts Magazines)
Scottish Society of Playwrights
Scottish PEN
Scottish Poetry Library
Scottish Storytelling Forum
Scottish Writers Centre
Society of Authors in Scotland
Universities Committee for Scottish Literature
Writers' Guild of Great Britain (Scottish Region)

Appendix 2: 'Literature, Nation', October 2009

LITERATURE FORUM FOR SCOTLAND

MMM PROJECT THE LEGACY

Purpose — Process — Outcomes

FINAL REPORT

LITERATURE NATION

A Strategic Vision for Literature in Scotland 2008 — 2018

Understanding our present, connecting with our past, imagining Scotland's future.

2008 - 2018

It is our conviction that Scotland's literature is critical to understanding our present, connecting with our past, and imagining Scotland's future.

The centrality of literature to our national culture and society has sometimes been obscured by treating it as one art form among many. Nonetheless, literature is vital to the arts because it is necessary to them all. While playing a complementary role to images and sounds in the performing arts, literature provides the basis for critical discourse in all the arts. It is the medium through which we come to understand the role of the arts in self and social understanding. Without literature, the cultural role of the arts is lost.

The point of a national literature is not to sustain distinctiveness for its own sake, but to reflect the diversity and character of a society. By expressing common values and conflicts, literature provides the basis for conversation and so of civilised cohesion. Through literature in all its forms, including journalism, we can understand each other better. Writers can give minority and marginalised voices a proper hearing and ensure that no one is excluded from the social dialogue. Scottish Literature has excelled in this social role and is currently reaching out across contemporary society to share the means of expression that are democracy's most important cultural entitlement.

The *right* to express oneself in a democratic society is meaningless without the *ability* to express oneself. Literature plays a vital role in debate and discussion regarding politics, social issues, cultural identity, philosophy, morality and religion, in educational and other public arenas. We recognise the right to freedom of expression and dissent through literature as a foundation of democratic citizenship. Scottish literary tradition is grounded in respect for the self, social thinking, equality and democracy. Scottish citizens of all ages, irrespective of cultural origin, have the right to access their nation's traditions of thought and political expression. These in turn become the basis for Scotland's distinctive contribution to global citizenship.

As the Scottish Arts Council moves towards reorganisation and merger into Creative Scotland, there is a danger of missing the beat and losing the impetus and momentum vital to literature's ongoing success. That is why the Literature Forum, which encompasses Scotland's key literary and writers' organisations, has set out this challenging strategy.

THE STRATEGY

Literature, Nation is a new strategy for Scotland's literature, allied with language and publishing. Its guiding purposes are to:

- **place literature at the heart of every community**, accessible to every citizen
- **raise the prestige** of Scotland's literature nationally and internationally
- **invest in writers and writing** as a means to ensure the creativity, prosperity and wellbeing of Scotland
- **sustain the linguistic diversity** of Scotland and, in particular, the contribution of the Gaelic and Scots languages to literature
- **position the publishing industry** in Scotland to meet the changing needs of the 21st century
- **fashion a framework and structures** to meet the continuing development of literature in Scotland.

Throughout this document we understand literature to include poetry; fiction; storytelling; history; philosophy; drama and screenwriting; cultural, social and political criticism; autobiography, biography and travel writing, and multimedia texts.

Key Outcomes

Summary of key outcomes

- development and implementation of a **national readership strategy**
- the opportunity for every learner to **experience and study Scottish literature** in a structured way
- a sustained programme for **identifying, nurturing and recognising literary talent**.
- the regular presence of **Scottish writers at international festivals**, forums, and promotional events.
- co-ordination of Scotland's **literary tourism**, including a dynamic **network of literary festivals and events** across Scotland.
- **an integrated network** of national organisations able to deliver on these objectives and to further develop nationally and internationally the role of literature, languages, publishing and writers, including poets, storytellers and dramatists.

1. Literature, National and International

Literature is the living memory of a nation. It connects past and present and provides the essential vocabulary for describing who we are, whence we came, whither we travel.

No country that neglects its national literature can claim to be a modern nation or act as a civilising or even a distinctive force in world culture.

Literature underwrites the dynamism and diversity of the nation. Scotland has not one monolithic narrative but local, regional, national and international stories, metaphors and rhythms interacting, playing off and sparking against each other. Out of this comes a living, organic, evolving sense of ourselves as Scots, as Scottish, as world citizens grounded in the passionate, analytical, complex society that is Scotland. Equally important, without renewing its stories a nation cannot properly nurture its own citizens with a sense of confident, self-critical belonging.

Aims

- provide a **unified web portal** for information on Scottish literature nationally and internationally
- stimulate and **support effective structures for training**, professional development and career paths across the literature sector
- **recognise and reward outstanding achievement** by Scotland's writers
- establish a **strategic framework for the promotion of Scottish writers** in key markets and at key festivals in Scotland, the UK and internationally
- enable writers from Scotland to travel abroad in the service of **cultural exchange** and professional development
- **coordinate tours and visits** in Scotland by writers and maximise their benefit, as part of an international movement of dialogue and exchange which includes literatures of other cultures within Scotland

2. Literature, Literacy and Learning

Literature is central to education. Without inspiring models of creative language in all subject areas, there is no motivation for reading. Literature provides ideas, images and emotions that are benchmarks of aspiration and expression. Creative language is indispensable as a primary mode of learning. Literature is the key to a literate society.

To provide such ideas, images and emotions with a distinctly Scottish 'accent of the mind' gives Scotland's citizens the ideal starting point for a confident, international mindset.

Scottish literature, in all its diverse genres, forms, and periods, is an abundantly rich educational resource that can give Scotland the international edge.

Aims

- enable and develop a stronger structure for **co-operation** between national literature agencies, central and local government to achieve a **national readership strategy**
- **foster a dynamic two-way relationship** between contemporary literature in all its forms and the education sector, including regular visits by writers to all schools and the development and provision of appropriate resources to support learning
- improve and secure the place of Scotland's **literature and languages in the curriculum** in schools, colleges and universities
- embed an understanding of Scottish literature, languages and culture in initial **teacher education and continuing professional development**
- encourage all **Scottish libraries to acquire and promote Scottish literature**, and to support the role of libraries in schools
- assist in developing **creative approaches to literacy** issues outwith formal learning

3. Literature and Languages

Languages are the currency of literary expression and humanity's most important tool for understanding world and self.

Scotland is a small nation enriched by linguistic diversity. We have three long standing and deeply rooted language traditions: Gaelic, Scots and English.

In addition, we have a broad range of new community languages, an abundance of dialects and a proud tradition of language learning, from Greek and Latin to Chinese.

Bi- or multilingualism is an educational and cultural asset, not a problem, and it is literature that underpins it. By encapsulating linguistic diversity at its best and translating between languages, literature provides both a guide and a purpose to language as cultural asset, social resource and human delight.

Aims

- **support Gaelic and Scots** through the publication, promotion, inter-translation and study of literature in these languages
- support the development of a **national strategy for the Scots language**
- recognise and encourage the roles and diversity of **other community languages in Scotland**, including sign language.
- promote the translation of **Scottish literature into other languages** and the literature of other cultures into Scotland's languages

4. Literature and the Creative Economy

Literature provides the backbone of the publishing industry in all its print and multimedia forms. Literature is also central to the broadcasting media and the digital sector. Without a distinctive and evolving corpus of texts, concepts, scripts and stories, there cannot be a small nation creative economy -only a branch office sub-economy.

This is not to ignore market disciplines but to recognise that, without tempering the market through distinctive creative involvement, the small nation cannot be a significant player.

Literary success is an important fulcrum in this arena, and Scotland's writers offer both the track record and role models for economic success. But Scotland needs to retain a greater share of the benefits of its intellectual property by investing in a productive infrastructure and the skills base.

Aims

- **strengthen and diversify publishing** in Scotland and its place in the global economy
- support **new business development** in literature related areas including publishing, distribution, book sales and digital media
- campaign to **improve the economic conditions** for publishers in Scotland
- **connect writers and storytellers** of all kinds with such business opportunities
- provide appropriate **training and mentoring for cultural entrepreneurs** and writers, in liaison with appropriate government agencies, industry bodies and educational institutions
- maximise the positive **potential of intellectual copyright to create wealth** and support literary endeavour
- support **literary magazines and related forms of publishing** and their role in providing a ladder of opportunity for literary talent
- **ensure the availability** of important Scottish texts
- promote opportunities linking literature with other artforms and **maximise creative and commercial collaborations**
- encourage the production and supply of **practical resources** for use in schools, colleges and universities.

5. Literature and Tourism

Scottish tourism was created by its writers, from Macpherson's Ossian and Sir Walter Scott to John Buchan, Neil Gunn, Ian Rankin and J.K. Rowling. Through books, films and the media Literature stimulates the curiosity that draw people to Scotland and, in turn, enriches their experiences when here. Literature is the gateway to the appreciation of landscape and culture and the motivation to travel.

This asset gives Scotland a strongly competitive position in the global stage but it is a presumed, rather than a consciously exploited, asset. Literary tourism is not a niche market or a branch-line, but a highway to the enjoyment and appreciation of Scotland.

Aims

- develop a national infrastructure for literary tourism in combination with national and regional agencies and market Scotland as a prime destination
- promote the birthplaces and landmarks associated with Scottish literature in every city and region, and stimulate imaginative forms of access and interpretation
- market Scotland's literary festivals in a coordinated year-round way as an attractive reason for visiting Scotland
- champion Scotland as an international model for literary tourism, contemporary and historical.

6. Literature, Health and Wellbeing

Literature in all its forms, written and oral, encourages communication and self-expression as well as an understanding of ourselves and other people.

Participating in such communication enhances wellbeing and contributes positively to the prevention and treatment of illness.

Aims

- develop the use of creative reading, writing and storytelling as a means of self-expression, communication, empathy and wellbeing
- support the role of literature and creative language in the treatment of illness, in partnership with appropriate professional agencies
- enable the voices of people who are ill, and their carers, to be included and heard.
- support the development of creative language and expression amongst marginalised, excluded, and restricted groups within society

Appendix 3: Bookbug – Scottish Book Trust’s Early Years Programme; and Assertive Outreach Programme: Bookbug for the Home Evaluation: Executive Summary

Scottish Book Trust promotes early literacy and positive parent and child attachment through its Bookbug programme by supporting parents to read, sing, and talk to their children from birth. The Bookbug programme focus has come from the strong foundation of research that has firmly established the importance of building literacy skills during the early years as well as the importance of positive parent and child interaction.

“Literacy-rich environments where pre-school children have access to books and other print materials and parents engage with them in age-appropriate learning opportunities contribute positively to child literacy and language and emotional and behavioural regulation.”

Dimitra Hartas, *British Educational Research Journal*, 2010.

Our programme consists of four key elements:

Bookbug Packs

Every child in Scotland receives a free Bookbug pack of high quality books and resources at the following four stages:

- Baby pack – between 6 and 16 weeks from the Health Visitor
- Toddler pack – between 1 and 2 years from the Health Visitor
- Pirate pack – when aged 3 years at nursery
- Primary 1 Family Pack – when in primary 1

The Bookbug Programme supports all families in Scotland by giving them practical tools and information to help read, sing, talk and cuddle at home. We ensure that by the time every child in Scotland starts school, they have at least 12 books of their own, crayons, pencils and activities to do with their families. Every year 240,000 Bookbug packs are given free to families in Scotland.

We operate an extremely cost effective model, bringing better value to Scottish Government and families in Scotland. Due to economies of scale, our packs cost around £2.70 each to produce, but the contents to buy commercially would be around £25.00.

Bookbug Sessions

Bookbug Sessions currently take place in libraries and community settings in 31 authorities in Scotland. They are free, fun-filled sessions of stories, songs and rhymes for parents and children aged birth to 4 years. Bookbug Sessions are designed to demonstrate to parents how to use the books and resources gifted in their Bookbug packs. They encourage parents to cuddle, read, talk and sing to their children at home.

Every year, more than 12,000 Bookbug Sessions take place across every local authority in Scotland. In 2013, these sessions were attended by over 480,000 parents and children - an increase of 20% on the previous year.

Bookbug's Library Challenge

Bookbug's Library Challenge is a scheme to encourage parents to join their children to the local library and regularly borrow books for free. Children can collect stamps every time they visit the library to receive beautifully illustrated certificates.

In addition to providing resources to parents in the form of Bookbug Packs, we want to help families access other free resources and services in their local community, namely the library.

Assertive Outreach

The objective of the Bookbug Assertive Outreach programme is to introduce the principles of Bookbug Sessions – talking, singing, cuddling and booksharing with young children – into the homes of the most vulnerable families in Scotland to help them to lead happier, healthier and safer lives.

We work collaboratively with key contacts from each local authority to ensure that the Bookbug Assertive Outreach programme is tailored to and complements existing provision within the area. We provide training for early years professionals to encourage better interaction between parents and young children in the home, encourage use of the resources gifted in their Bookbug packs, and encourage and support parents to access early years provision in the wider community, including public Bookbug Sessions at the local library.

The Bookbug Assertive Outreach programme embraces many of the key aspirations for transformational change for the early years as set out in the Early Years Framework, including representing a practical demonstration of how targeted help will enable vulnerable families to get the most from a universal service.

The Bookbug Assertive Outreach programme is already running in 16 Scottish local authorities since it began in 2012/13. A further 8 authorities will take part each year over the next 2 years, reaching all 32 authorities over 4 years.

The independent evaluation of year 1 of Assertive Outreach is now available. The key findings from the evaluation on the impact of the programme on children and families include:

- Parents feel more equipped to play and interact with their children and there are sustained changes in how they read, sing and talk with them
- Parents feel they have a closer bond with their children
- Children gaining in confidence and self-expression
- Children improving language and communication skills
- Children improving behaviour
- Children being better prepared to fit in with some of the routines of nursery

The impact of the programme on professionals includes:

- 414 people were trained to deliver Bookbug Sessions in the home environment through the AO programme, and approximately 548 families have been reached by these trainees in year 1
- 99% of people trained through the programme felt that the training was relevant to their role and a good use of their time
- Professional's practice—how they interact with children and families and how they do their job—has been positively impacted
- Professionals have found the programme to be a flexible, adaptable tool that they can use to address a wide range of family needs, such as: substance misuse problems, families whose

children are accommodated, families lacking in confidence, families with children that have delayed speech or behavioural problems, and families that require support to interact with their children.

Bookbug and early learning and childcare

We see Bookbug as having a prominent role in investing in a high quality early learning and childcare for children from the age of one. The Bookbug programme already delivers training to practitioners who engage with young children and their families. By training practitioners from a diverse range of backgrounds (health visitors, nursery staff, library staff, social workers, prison staff, third sector organisations) we ensure that consistent messages are given to families about the benefits of reading, talking, singing and cuddling with their children.

It is crucial that we engage with Early Years practitioners throughout their careers. In order for this to happen it is important for the key messages of the Bookbug programme to be embedded into the statutory training of all early years professionals as well as further or top up training to be available for previously qualified professionals and third sector staff and volunteers.

To date this year we have given 1,754 practitioners training to deliver Bookbug activities and pass key messages on to parents.

Bookbug for the Home - 644
Bookbug Session Leader - 230
Health Visitor - 230
Pirate Pack - 413
Story Time - 237

Background

Bookbug is run by Scottish Book Trust and funded by The Scottish Government. Bookbug Session Training is funded by Creative Scotland. Local pack gifting and coordination of Bookbug Sessions and Bookbug's Library Challenge are organised by local authorities via the library service or education department in conjunction with the NHS. Scottish Book Trust promotes books, reading and writing to babies, children and adults across Scotland.

"Love of reading is more important in academic achievement than a child's social or economic background".

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Reading for Change*, 2002.

Marc Lambert, Chief Executive, Scottish Book Trust
March 2014

Assertive Outreach Programme

Bookbug for the Home Evaluation

Executive Summary

Perhaps unexpectedly, Scottish Book Trust with its Bookbug for the Home programme has taken on an unusual and courageous societal role. They are providing conceptual leadership, helping Scotland to reframe our cultural understanding of reading. The Bookbug for the Home programme is asking us to conceive of reading in its earliest stages not as an academic capacity, but as an emotional one. – Dr Suzanne Zeedyk

The key finding from this evaluation is that the use of Bookbug for the Home with families goes far beyond literacy. Bookbug has a positive impact on improved parent/child or family interaction, language development and positive behavioural change:

Of the professionals introducing Bookbug for the Home with families, 98% said they had seen positive impacts for the families involved.

It is estimated that the 414 people trained in Bookbug for the Home have worked with 548 vulnerable families.

Bookbug for the Home increased the number of people reading daily with their children from 41% to 78%, and in the case of singing or rhyming daily with their children from 53% to 78%.

69% of professionals who had introduced Bookbug for the Home said that families were more likely to engage with their children as a result.

Feedback from families that have been involved has concluded that:

- their twins 'know how to do a proper cuddle now' and they 'tell their parents and brother that they love them';
- they [the parent] 'definitely find the interaction easier' with their small children;
- their child 'sits and asks for a book. Then it's like she's reading to me, trying to recognise the words. It's made the bond a bit stronger.'

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Scottish Book Trust (SBT) is Scotland's leading agency for the promotion of reading, writing and literature working with writers, children, teachers, librarians and readers from all backgrounds to spread a love of books and reading.
- 1.2 Bookbug is SBT's Early Years programme, encouraging parents and children to read together from birth. The Bookbug programme provides free packs of books and resources to every baby, toddler, three and five year old in Scotland, while Bookbug Sessions are run by libraries and other community settings across Scotland. These sessions provide free opportunities encouraging parents and carers to talk, share books, sing, play and cuddle their babies and children. The aim is that these activities lead to improvements in confidence, social skills, speech and language development and parent and child attachment.
- 1.3 Assertive Outreach (AO) is a Scottish Government funded programme which began in 2012, which trains early years professionals in the principles of Bookbug Sessions in eight local authorities each year, aiming to reach all 32 local authorities over four years.
- 1.4 The objective of Assertive Outreach is to introduce the principles of Bookbug Sessions – talking, singing, cuddling and book sharing with young children – into the homes of the most vulnerable families in Scotland to help them to lead happier, healthier and safer lives. Newly trained early years professionals, who might be family support officers, health visitors, social workers or third sector workers, introduce Bookbug activities to encourage quality interaction between parents and their children in the homes which they visit. It is also hoped that these activities will encourage vulnerable families to attend public Bookbug Sessions or other local early years provision. In the first year 414 early years professionals or volunteers received Bookbug for the Home training.
- 1.5 SBT's Bookbug Programme fits with national initiatives and approaches in Scotland focusing on children's development generally, and more specifically on early years. These include the work of the Early Years Collaborative aiming to accelerate the high level principles set out in GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) and the Early Years Framework into practical action; namely to deliver tangible improvement in outcomes and reduce inequalities for Scotland's vulnerable children, and to shift the balance of public services towards early intervention and prevention.

2 Evaluation

- 2.1 SBT commissioned Blake Stevenson and Dr Suzanne Zeedyk in autumn 2012 to undertake a year-long evaluation, covering the first year of the Assertive Outreach programme. This involved surveys immediately following Bookbug for the Home leader training, and then follow up surveys 3 months and 6 months later to explore the extent to which the training was being used, and the impacts it was having. In addition, families and Bookbug for the Home leaders also completed diaries of the singing, rhyming and reading activities taking place in the families, before and during

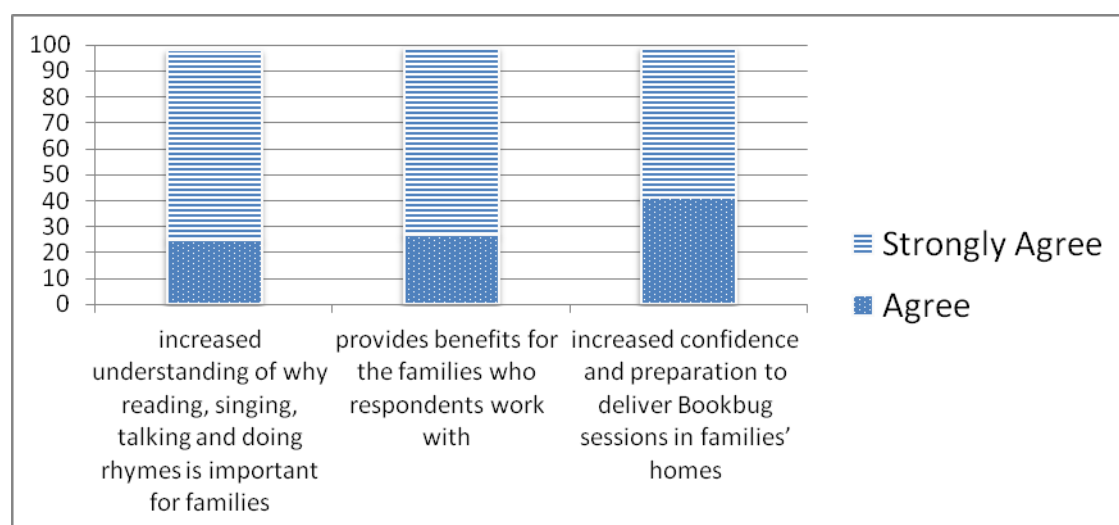
the intervention. Case studies were undertaken with three families taking part in Bookbug for the Home sessions and two organisations where staff had received Bookbug for the Home training.

3 Results

Profile of trainees and satisfaction with training

- 3.1 Those receiving Bookbug for the Home training represented diverse roles including Home School Partnership Worker, Family Support Worker, Social Worker, Nursery Worker, Health Visiting Staff Nurse and volunteers amongst others. The main groups of survey respondents were from local authority (37%), third sector (28%) and NHS (26%).
- 3.2 Bookbug for the Home training provided a very high level of satisfaction. The vast majority (95%) of 249 respondents were very satisfied with the training. The remaining 5% were satisfied.
- 3.3 Trainees perceived the training content to be relevant to their roles. 247 respondents (99%) agreed or strongly agreed with this and 99% also felt that attending the training was a good use of their time. Figure 1 shows the benefits trainees perceived in attending training.

Figure 1 The benefits of attending Bookbug for the Home training



Impact on staff practice

- 3.4 98% (239) of respondents surveyed immediately after training said that they planned to apply what they learned in their work. Six months after training in a follow-up survey of 84 trainees, 49% had delivered Bookbug sessions and 51% had not.
- 3.5 Those who have used Bookbug for the Home training in practice, have done so with an average of 2.7 families. Assuming that 49% of people who have been trained in

Bookbug for the Home have subsequently used this training with families, and that they have done this with an average of 2.7 families, it is estimated that the 414 people trained in Bookbug for the Home have worked with 548 families.

- 3.6 77% of those who stated that they have not yet used Bookbug for the Home training with families, say that they still intend to do so. Based on the total number of people trained (414), it is estimated that 211 have not yet applied their training. If they were to do so, and to work with the average number of families (2.7), there is the potential for a further 570 families to receive Bookbug Session input as a result of the first year of Bookbug for the Home training.
- 3.7 The most common reason for people not yet having introduced Bookbug for the Home activities was the low level of direct contact which they had with families or the difficulty in finding protected time to deliver Bookbug Sessions. There was some limited demand for follow up training, practice sharing and other forms of support including mentoring in order to support staff to use the training received.
- 3.8 Bookbug for the Home leaders, who have used their training, most commonly use it with families where there was some difficulty for parents engaging with their children. Issues relating to children's speech development and social skills were also identified, along with parents who lacked in confidence, and families who were reluctant to engage with structures and groups.

"A couple of families didn't want to attend Bookbug Sessions or go to the library. I decided to do the home sessions and after one session they could see how much the child enjoyed the sessions. This encouraged the families to read more to their children and have a story at bedtime."

- 3.9 71% of those who had introduced Bookbug for the Home activities said that the Bookbug training had impacted on their professional practice, changing things about the way they did their job. 63% said that they now introduced songs and rhymes to families where they previously would not have done so, and 63% that their confidence in doing so had increased. 50% said that they now introduced books to families where they previously would not have done so, and 53% that their confidence in doing so had increased.

"I feel that once you do a few Bookbug Sessions your confidence grows and you find new ways of delivering the sessions and involving the parents."

Case Studies with organisations

- 3.10 Case studies in two organisations found many benefits of Bookbug for the Home being described by both staff and parents:
- it offers staff a set of tools and resources to be adapted to organisational and individual family circumstances rather than a prescriptive rigid package;

- it offers staff an opportunity to observe family interaction and to work more closely with them;
- parents become more able to play and interact with their children, through being given new ideas of more engaging play and book sharing;
- parents feel more equipped to play with children and to use Bookbug activities in other settings e.g. to defuse potentially stressful situations;
- children learn from Bookbug Sessions about turn taking, paying attention, creativity, language development and imaginative play amongst other things, and this aids their transition to nursery; and
- important activities are accessible to families who would not access a public Bookbug Session i.e. either in the home or in groups run by organisations.

Staff comments from case studies regarding the impact of Bookbug training and Bookbug for the Home sessions

“A huge benefit for when they [children] go to school”

“It’s been hugely helpful to see the kids in their home environment and helped staff to respond to their needs in nursery.”

“[Bookbug for the Home is] a good initiative and supports staff to work with families in their homes”

“A practical form of support which is adaptable to suit all service users.”

4 Impact on families

- 4.1 Of the Bookbug for the Home leaders who had introduced Bookbug activities in the home, 98% said that they had seen positive impacts on the families involved and some of the ways in which this had been observed are shown in Table 1.
- 4.2 Whilst a large percentage of families were already reading with their children before Bookbug, they were more likely to do this after the Bookbug for the Home sessions with the number reading daily with their children increasing from 41% to 78%. Similarly many parents (53%) were singing or rhyming daily with their children before Bookbug, but this increases to 78% after the Bookbug for the Home sessions.

“I now make an effort to sing with the children and read to them. [Bookbug leader] helped me gain confidence in singing with the children, as well as helped me to remember the words of songs.”

Table 1. Bookbug for the Home leaders' views on how Bookbug has impacted on families

	%
I have seen children being happy and engaged during Bookbug activities	93
I have seen parents interacting positively with children during Bookbug activities	90
Parents have reported using books outside of the times I have visited	71
Parents have reported using songs and rhymes outside of the times I have visited	61
Parents have reported having positive interaction with their children doing Bookbug activities outside of the times I have visited	42
Parents have reported that Bookbug activities have had a positive impact on their children's behaviour	29

4.3 Evidence from diaries completed by Bookbug leaders shows that they believe there can be sustained changes to the way that adults read, sing and talk with their children as a result of the Bookbug for the Home sessions they have led. 69% believe that there have been some positive changes to parental attitudes which will lead to more of these forms of interaction (Table 2).

Table 2. Early years professionals' perception on the attitudes of and frequency of adults towards reading, singing, talking and/or engaging with their children as a result of Bookbug for the Home sessions

Changes in attitude towards and frequency in engaging with children	%
n/a	12
Less likely	0
No change	19
Slightly more likely to	31
Much more likely to	38

4.4 Bookbug for the Home input led to some increased uptake of public Bookbug Sessions and other services. Of 42 respondents who had introduced Bookbug for the Home, eight (19%) had taken a total of 26 families they worked with to a public Bookbug Session. Those who had not taken families to public Bookbug Sessions had not done so because of families' resistance about attending a group session, practical reasons (transport, session availability), the family's current circumstances being a barrier, or because they had encouraged families to attend Bookbug Sessions on their own.

4.5 Of the 42 respondents who had introduced Bookbug for the Home, 17 (41%) said that a total of 46 families they worked with had reported attending a public Bookbug

Session on their own. Nine respondents (21%) said that families they worked with had reported involvement with services they had previously not engaged with, as a result of Bookbug activities. These included library services, parent and toddler groups, baby massage, nursery-related groups and services and adult learning classes.

Case Studies with families and family diaries

4.6 Case studies were undertaken with three families, where Bookbug for the Home had been introduced because of issues relating to family interaction and/or children's language and behavioural development. The case study interviews provided evidence from both parents and professionals of;

- parents having renewed appreciation of spending time with their children;
- children gaining in confidence and self-expression;
- children improving language and communication skills;
- children improving behaviour;
- children being better prepared to fit in with some of the routines of nursery activities; and
- Bookbug activities providing the foundation for additional themed activities including arts.

Parents comments from case studies on the impact of Bookbug for the Home

For one family, having more adult interactions as a result of Bookbug for the Home, meant the children (twins) started to interact with each other and their family in a more positive way. Comments from the parents included:

"They [twins] know they have to take turns. Before they would have screamed!"

"It teaches rules and structures without them realising"

"We could never have done a family thing like go to the cinema before". [parent noting that family outings are now an option]

For another family, Bookbug for the Home Sessions have helped the parents and child to form a closer attachment.

"She [child] sits and asks for a book. Then it's like she's reading to me, trying to recognise the words. It's made the bond a bit stronger."

"They didn't do that before Bookbug." [parent referring to children doing role play and imaginative play]

- 4.7 Bookbug Sessions play a role in stimulating activities that link to learning core concepts and to routine as evidenced by quotes from parents' diaries, which document activities they did with their children during the period of receiving Bookbug Sessions. The science that underpins Bookbug principles, stresses that emotional development is healthiest when the child has extensive experience of sharing interests with another person, whether that relates to events, letters, numbers, or songs. The positive effects of Bookbug Sessions on the ways in which children interact and the positive ways they can relate to people can also be seen as enhancing school readiness, even if this element has not been directly measured in the study.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

- 5.1 Year 1 of the Assertive Outreach programme has successfully pioneered the way for the subsequent three years. It has developed effective training and flexible resources, and motivated and supported diverse early years professionals from public, health and third sectors to introduce singing, rhyming and book sharing activities with the families they work with, both in home and group settings. Where introduced, Bookbug Sessions can change the way in which families interact, as well as encourage access to local Bookbug Sessions and other activities. Challenges remain in introducing the concept to families where there may be other priorities or initial parental resistance, however the programme has shown itself to be a flexible user-friendly resource for workers, adaptable to many different family situations, with families quickly seeing benefits from it. Positive feedback from families about Bookbug's benefits endorses the view that it can impact beyond literacy, into children's wider development, social interaction, relationships and language.
- 5.2 A key element for the future is for SBT to increase understanding of the potential of Bookbug Sessions, and the underlying science. This will help to ensure that the Bookbug for the Home Programme can play a fuller role within the wider early years framework it aims to contribute to as Suzanne Zeedyk, Developmental Psychologist concludes, *'This report points to an exciting expansion of Scottish Book Trust's aims. Perhaps the most significant insight to emerge from the findings is the realisation that Bookbug in the Home staff are instinctively using the programme not simply to teach reading, but to build relationships. All the emerging brain science tells us that this focus on relationships is on target, because services for families cannot be truly effective if they are not based in relationships. Why is that? Because human brains feel safest when they can share rhythms with other human brains. That is what sciences such as Communicative Musicality teach us. Thus, when Bookbug for the Home leaders recite rhymes together with parents and children, they are boosting more than reading capacities — they are boosting the physiological capacity of the*

family to bond. The Bookbug for the Home programme is therefore encouraged to include much more brain science in the material it delivers to staff, so that staff can increase their confidence and curiosity about the activities of the programme.

Perhaps unexpectedly, Scottish Book Trust with its Bookbug for the Home programme has taken on an unusual and courageous societal role. They are providing conceptual leadership, helping Scotland to reframe our cultural understanding of reading. The Bookbug for the Home programme is asking us to conceive of reading in its earliest stages not as an academic capacity, but as an emotional one.'