

# Reading Together – a campaign for change

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# About BookTrust

- We are the UK's largest children's reading charity, supporting over 1.5 million children and families in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to discover the magic of reading every year
- Our mission is to get all children reading by choice, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds
- 95% of parents with children under seven know that reading is important, but only 42% of children of that age have a bedtime story. We exist to narrow that gap



# Why we do it

## It's not just about literacy...

- Children who choose to read are happier, healthier, and form stronger bonds and relationships
- They do better at school and are more creative
- They sleep better and have better mental health
- Reading positively affects social mobility: disadvantaged children are twice as likely to achieve highly at the end of primary school if they have been read to at home in their early years – these [Benefits of Reading](#) are carried into adulthood



## Our programmes to get children reading

- **Early years** (0-5 years) programmes such as [Bookstart](#) and [Storytime](#) support over 1 million families per year, providing books to all new-born children and targeted interventions to reach the most disadvantaged children and families
- **Vulnerable children** - around 13,000 vulnerable children, such as those who are looked after, on the edge of care or otherwise vulnerable will be supported by our literacy and numeracy programmes this year including through [Letterbox Club](#)
- **Programmes in schools** to support school children and school libraries with books and resources. [Bookbuzz](#) supports 270,000+ secondary school children.



# BookTrust's Programme Reach

## Letterbox Club

Our intensive reading programme goes to vulnerable children in **87% of local authorities.**



We provide dual language books in over 30 different languages.

**98% of local authorities** in England use our SEND books and resources.

Over 25,000 children across Wales take part in the **Big Welsh Rhyme Time.**

## BookTrust Storytime

We partner with **2,400 libraries** to deliver BookTrust Storytime sessions.



## Book reviews and recommendations

We publish over 370 book reviews a year and send our Great Books Guide to **every primary school.**

**Over 260,000 Y7 and Y8 students** choose a book to keep as part of Bookbuzz.



## Bookstart Baby

We reach **over 90%** of newborn babies in England and Wales with books and resources.

## Pori Drwy Stori

We reach **over 50,000** children in nursery and reception classes in Wales with bilingual resources.

## Bookstart Early Years in Wales

We reach **over 30,000 2-3-year-olds** with books and resources.

## Author events and school visits

We reach **at least 50,000** children through our online and in person events with creators of colour.



## Bookstart Toddler and Bookstart Pre-schooler

We reach **over 400,000** low-income families with children aged 1-4 with books, activities and inspiration.

All figures apply to England, Wales and N.I. unless otherwise stated.

**In 2022-23 we reached over 1.5 million children.**

**We have a network of over 6,000 community-based partners which gives us access to all families in pockets of deprivation as well as those in the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas.**

**We work with 90% of libraries, every state primary school and a quarter of all secondary schools (England, Wales, N.I.).**

# UK Context

- One country, four nations (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- Culture and education is responsibility of the nations and local government
- Local elections in May 2024 in many areas
- UK-level elections before end 2024
- Polling indicates significant change in elected law makers
- It is a moment to influence the thinking of newly elected councils locally and a new government in Westminster



**BookTrust research shows that 95% of parents with children under 7 understand that reading is important for their child (1).**

**However, one in five children aged 0-4 have a book read to them less than once a month (2).**



# Campaign goals

1

Raise awareness of wider benefits of reading, beyond those related to literacy

2

Increase the profile of children's reading and its role as a force for good

3

Get better access to decision-makers

4

Draw attention to programmes which are proven to work

# Policy and programme ask

 **BookTrust**  
Getting children reading



**Reading together,  
changing  
children's lives**

Based on experience and research, we have identified four areas for systemic change. Our focus is on young children aged 0-7.

We believe there is a need to:

- Embed reading in the life of every low-income family by providing books, resources and reading experiences.
- Provide sustained support, books and resources to help vulnerable children and families who can benefit most from the special characteristics of reading together.
- Help midwives, health visitors, librarians, family support workers and early years teachers promote family reading.
- Help primary teachers become even more powerful advocates for reading for pleasure.
- [Reading Together](#)

# Primary audiences



National decision-makers in politics and civil service



Key stakeholders from local government, early years, publishing and research



Current and potential funders



NOT a campaign aimed at mobilising the general public in phase 1

# Launch



## Media package

Clear policy ask

Top line fresh research hook

Celebrity children's authors for  
broadcast and print media

Nursery settings available for  
filming

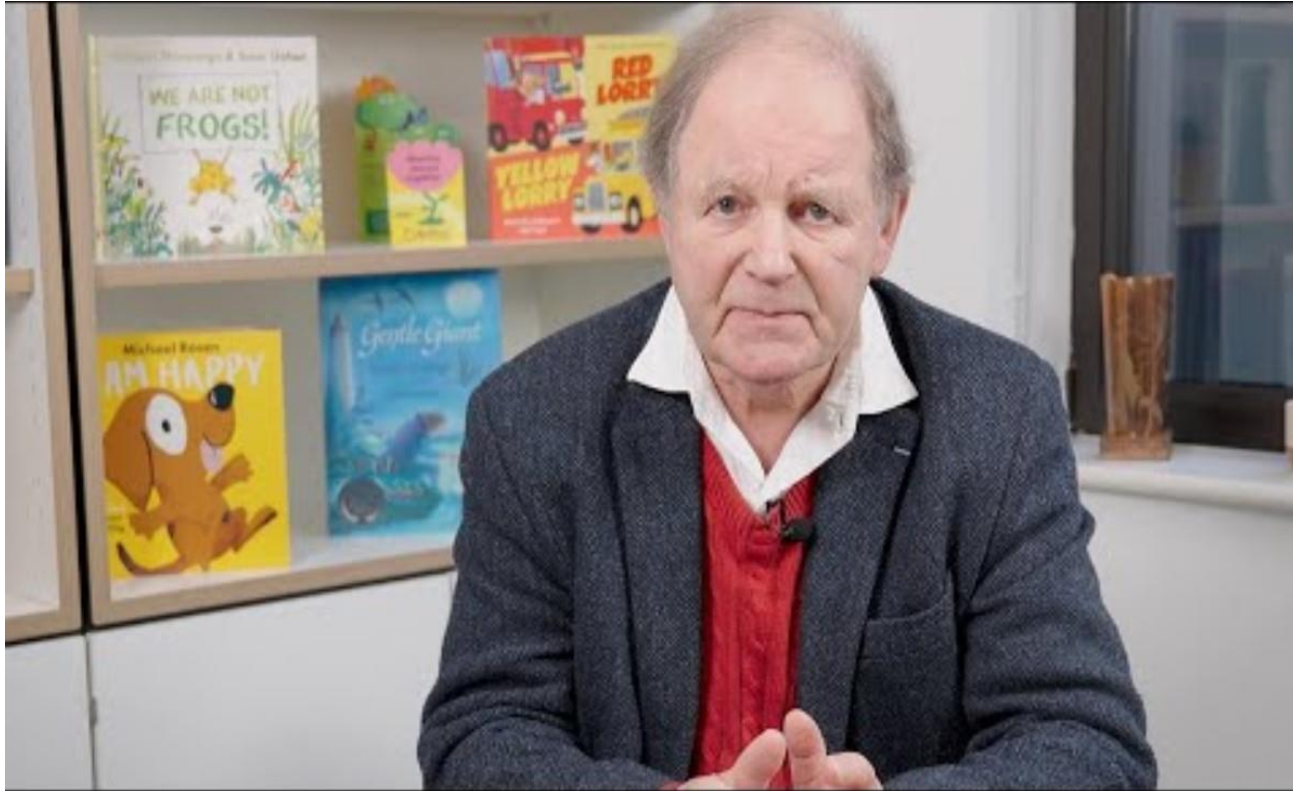


## Stakeholder launch

Demonstrate size of network and  
connections

Bring people together from  
different sectors

# Supporting assets



- [Press release](#), [video](#), proposal [summary](#), rights-cleared images

# A day of activity



# Media

- Interview coverage with Michael Morpurgo on **BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 4 Today, LBC Breakfast, Times Radio, Matt Chorley, C5 News (with Diana)**
- Interview coverage with Michael Rosen on **BBC News, BBC London News, ITV London News**
- Repeated across the BBC national radio news bulletins on: **BBC Radio 2, BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio 5 Live, BBC Radio 6 Music**
- Further coverage on national radio news bulletins on: **Greatest Hits Radio, Magic FM, Hits Radio, Heart**
- News bulletin coverage across all **BBC Regional Radios** (+20)
- Print coverage in **The Guardian, Daily Telegraph, The I, Daily Express, Daily Mirror**
- Further online coverage in **Daily Mail, Independent, Evening Standard**
- News coverage on: **BBC Online, Nursery World, Bookseller, BookBrunch, Big Issue**
- Syndication of the **Press Association** story across regional newspapers (200+ online)
- Piers Torday spoke to **LBC Nick Ferrari** in an interview supporting the campaign



**War Horse author Michael Morpurgo says he was 'put off' reading for more than a decade after starting at school - because of the need for spelling and punctuation**

- The author, 80, said he was expecting 'more stories and more fun' at school
- But was put off reading because of the need for spelling and punctuation

Culture

## Michael Morpurgo leads call for urgent children's reading investment



**Michael Morpurgo backs call to ensure poorer children have access to books**

Leading children's author says deprived children in UK are missing out on lifetime of reading for pleasure



Michael Morpurgo and a coalition of authors are backing BookTrust over children's access to reading and books. Photograph: David Levenson/Getty Images  
Deprived children are being robbed of a lifetime of reading for pleasure, by governments that are "simply blind" to the benefits of loving literature from an early age, according to the author **Michael Morpurgo**.

newsround

**Popular authors ask government to give kids more opportunities to read**



**Evening Standard**

BBC RADIO



TIMESRADIO

## Morpurgo encourages 'book clubs for parents' to help children read

The former children's laureate has signed a letter that highlights rising child illiteracy



# Launch Event

- Over 100 guests from very different sectors – vulnerable children, libraries, other charities, local government, authors, researchers, Funders
- A stake in the ground for key partners about our public policy work and our ability to generate profile for the cause of children's reading





# What next?



Ongoing engagement with national decision-makers in politics and civil service with new insights, briefings and programme costings



Involving key stakeholders from local government, early years, publishing and research in demonstration projects e.g. pilot programmes for vulnerable children and workforce training



Working with high profile authors on public campaigning to maintain the profile of children's reading



New research on the impact of programmes and benefits of reading