

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 15 May 2013

Subject: Bookbug Programme Parent Survey

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To inform committee of the feedback from the recent Parent Consultation Survey regarding the changes to the Early Years Programme in Libraries in particular those affecting Bookbug sessions.
- 1.2** To advise committee of changes to delivery of Bookbug and Storytime sessions as a result of parent feedback.

2. Recommendations

The Educational Services Committee is recommended to:

- i. Note the contents of this report and the results of feedback from parents of children attending Bookbug sessions.
- ii. Note the impact of feedback from parents, staff and volunteers on the future delivery of Bookbug and Storytime Sessions.

3. Background

- 3.1** A review of the Early Years literacy programme provided by Libraries & Culture within Educational Services was carried out in autumn 2012. This resulted in enhanced and expanded Pre 5 delivery including a number of changes being made to the Bookbug programme aimed at children aged 0-3 years.
- 3.2** Changes to the Bookbug programme were informed by health and safety concerns, best practise nationally and consultation with professional staff and session leaders. Changes included capping session sizes at 15 children per session, and a new booking system for session places. Contingencies were also made to ensure places for children referred by the CHCP and other support services.
- 3.3** Libraries & Cultural Services also identified a gap in provision for children aged 3-5 years and as a result of the review have introduced a new programme of 'Storytime sessions' aimed at supporting literacy for this age group. This ensures a seamless link of provision from baby, to nursery and to Primary (through class visits and homework clubs).

- 3.4** A report was submitted to the Educational Services Committee on 20 February 2013 informing members of enhancements to the Early Years Provision in public libraries and the changes to the Bookbug Programme and the rationale behind these changes.
- 3.5** Members were asked to note the contents of the report including a rolling programme of consultation with parents, staff and volunteers with a view to receive further feedback on the outcomes of this consultation at the next Educational Services meeting on 15 May 2013.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** As part of Educational Services, Libraries & Cultural Services promotes a Pre 5 programme including Bookbug, reflecting the council's commitment to Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), improving outcomes for all children and ensuring that resources are used effectively and efficiently. This new libraries Pre 5 programme supports early years literacy through a progression of library based services from Bookbug for 0-3yrs, through to Storytimes for 3-5yrs and on to new teacher supported Homework Clubs for Primary children. These changes and the expansion to involve children aged 0-5yrs are also endorsed by the Scottish Book Trust which coordinates Bookbug nationally.
- 4.2** A consultation process with parents began in February 2013. This consultation aimed to gather information on parents views regarding a number of aspects of the Bookbug and Storytime Programmes including the recent changes made to delivery. The consultation process received 68 returns representing approx 60% of Bookbug parents. Full statistical feedback resulting from this survey is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.3** Feedback was received from parents from across the authority. On a branch by branch basis this translates as Alexandria 29.5%, Balloch 17.8%, Clydebank 7.3%, Dalmuir 7.3%, Dumbarton 17.8% Duntocher 7.3% and Parkhall 13%. Of the questionnaires received most parents (48%) reported that they had heard about Bookbug from friends, with 31% of parents being advised by their Health Visitor.
- 4.4** 85% of parents reported that the (reduced) size of their Bookbug Session was 'just right' with 15% feeling it was too small. This indicates a significant majority support for the reduced size of sessions. However it was noted from parents' comments that non attendance can make some sessions quiet and that there is capacity in some branches to increase the size of sessions. Parents' comments in full are shown Appendix 2. As a result of this feedback, where there is the capacity, session sizes have been increased to 20 places in Alexandria, Clydebank, and Dumbarton Libraries providing an additional 40 places per week. This is effective from 13th April 2013.

- 4.5** The vast majority of parents rated Bookbug Sessions very highly with 97% of parents rating sessions as either Excellent or Very Good. Importantly 100% of parents also reported that sessions encouraged them to sing and read with their child at home and 99% have noticed an improvement in their child's communication and confidence, a key outcome of the programme.
- 4.6** The changes to Bookbug Sessions include the implementation of a new registration system. 76% of parents reported that they found the registration system to be straightforward; the remaining 24% found the process complicated. Significantly 88.5% of parents secured a place for their child at their 'first choice' of session. Of those who did not 100% secured a place at their 'second choice'. This reflects the efforts made to ensure available capacity whilst capping sizes of individual sessions.
- 4.7** The vast majority of parents secured their session of choice and found the process straightforward. It is evident, however, from comments received that some parents do not like the registration process in principle. It is necessary to have a registration process to avoid a 'drop-in' system which caused safety issues and hindered quality of provision in the past. Whilst it is positive that 3/4 of parents found the process straightforward it is clear from comments that this process requires to be improved, in particular ensuring that there is continuity across all branches. Noting parents' concerns, the service is liaising with the Scottish Book Trust and other local authorities to identify suitable alternative systems of registration. A new system will be in place for after the summer holidays and will be reviewed after 6 months.
- 4.8** Although it is early days in terms of measuring the impact of changes made, parents were asked specifically about the impact of reduced session sizes and how at this point they would rate their and their child's experience of smaller sessions. 69% rated these as Excellent or Very Good. Parents' comments in general reflect a view that in some cases sizes could be larger and as per 4.4 above session sizes have been increased in three main branches to meet the views of some parents.
- 4.9** As part of the enhancement of Early Years provision in Public Libraries a new programme 'Storytime' has been launched for 3-5year olds for whom previously there was no provision. 89% of parents reported that their child would benefit from participating in Storytimes as a follow on from Bookbug Sessions. This provides strong evidence to support the development of this new programme.
- 4.10** Informal feedback from parents previously suggested that the session times allocated for Storytime were not universally suitable with the majority timetabled in the afternoon. Feedback from the questionnaire provided mixed views in terms of the most suitable session times with no one ideal time slot identified. However it is clear that the morning is the preferred period with 64% of parents preferring this to the afternoon. As a result over the next few months Storytimes will be re-scheduled to meet the needs of the majority of parents.

- 4.11** Appendix 3 of this report compares Early Years provision within Libraries pre and post the service review. This includes the increase in the number of Bookbug sessions and places available across the sector, and where the service has responded to parents input and requests including increasing sessions in some branches to meet demand.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues identified as a result of this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications within this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report.

8. Equalities Impact

- 8.1** A review has been carried out and there are no equalities impact issues raised as a consequence of this report. In reviewing Bookbug, changes to the numbers of places at individual Bookbug sessions reflect the existing usage in each branch, and sufficient sessions have been established to provide places to meet demand. Session sizes in three main branches have been increased providing an additional 40 places. Contingencies are also provided to accommodate children referred through support services e.g. CHCP, Social Work.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Legal Services and the Section 95 officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.
- 9.2** Parents of children attending Bookbug sessions, WDC learning development staff, WDC Library staff, the Scottish Book Trust and the Bookbug Coordinator have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The development and implementation of an enhanced Early Years literacy programme in libraries within Educational Services reflects the council's aspiration to improve life chances for children and young people which is one of the council's strategic priorities for 2012-2017.

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Appendix 1. Evaluation Feedback - Statistical
Appendix 2. Evaluation Feedback – Comments
Appendix 3. Comparison of Early Years Provision pre and post review

Background Papers: EIA Screening

Wards Affected: All Wards