

To: CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: AREA/REGISTRATION SERVICE BOOKSTART IN SCOTLAND PROGRAMME – DISTRIBUTION OF 'CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW BABY' CARDS
From: HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES		
Date: 23 April 2008	Ref: JAF/BN	

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Bookstart in Scotland Programme.

2 Background

- 2.1 Bookstart is a public/private partnership administered by Booktrust, an independent national charity that encourages people of all ages and cultures to discover and enjoy reading. Bookstart is the national programme that encourages all parents and carers to enjoy books with children from as early an age as possible by gifting them free books. Bookstart wants every child in the UK to develop a lifelong love of books.
- 2.2 Learning and Leisure Services working in collaboration with the Health Service, gives all children in North Lanarkshire the opportunity to appreciate the value of reading throughout their childhood and ensures that books are available even in the most deprived household. There are at present 24 Bookstart Rhymetime sessions running in Libraries in North Lanarkshire and these are proving so successful that several libraries have had to introduce extra sessions.
- 2.3 The Scottish Government has committed itself to supporting the three available gifting schemes ensuring through Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Plus and 'My Bookstart Treasure Chest', that children receive free books effectively from birth till they are three years of age.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 Bookstart Coordinators in Councils across the UK are currently approaching Registrars, to ask if it would be possible for 'Congratulations on Your New Baby' cards to be gifted to parents who come in to register the birth of their child. The cards advise that parents will soon receive the first of three Bookstart Book packs.
- 3.2 It is hoped the distribution of the 'Congratulations on Your New Baby' cards from the eight local registration offices in North Lanarkshire will raise awareness of Bookstart and lead to many more parents requesting their free pack of books from Health Visitors, Health Centres or Libraries.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that members approve the distribution of the Bookstart 'Congratulations on Your New Baby Cards' from North Lanarkshire Registration Offices to raise awareness of the Bookstart in Scotland Programme.

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Local Government Access to Information Act: For information on this report please contact John Fleming, Head of Central Services - Telephone No 01698 302228