Invitation to Tender:
Bookstart England meta-evaluation: Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Treasury and Bookstart Corner

Introduction

Tenders are invited for a meta evaluation of Bookstart England evaluations from 1992-2017. This will focus on three key programmes in England: Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Treasure and Bookstart Corner. This specification sets out the background and requirements for the research, and details of the tendering process.

The document includes the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Evaluation requirements
4. Project timetable and outputs
5. Costs
6. Tendering procedure and criteria
7. Appendix: terms and conditions

Background

**BookTrust** is the UK’s largest children's reading charity. BookTrust believe that every child has the right to experience the joy of reading and its associated cultural, social, emotional, educational and intellectual benefits. Each year we reach 3.4 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading. Our programmes and campaigns are delivered via health, library, schools, early years and outreach partners. They promote equality of access to books, and positive, quality reading experiences for all children, including those most likely to miss out on these opportunities. Through this we support children to develop a lifelong love of reading.

For more information on Book Trust’s programmes, please visit the [programmes pages](#) and [research pages](#) on our website.

**Bookstart**

BookTrust's flagship programme, Bookstart, was the first national bookgifting programme in the world, which began as a pilot in Birmingham in 1992. Bookstart is celebrating 25 years this year, and more information on the history of Bookstart is available on the website [here](#). BookTrust’s initial programme Bookstart Baby was focussed on babies aged 0-12 months, and since then BookTrust has developed a range of programmes to support a love of reading in the early years.
**Bookstart Baby and Bookstart Treasure** aim to enable every mum, dad and carer in England to inspire a love of books, stories and rhymes in babies and young children. The programmes are based on the simple premise that children who have an early introduction to books and are read to every day, benefit educationally, culturally, socially and emotionally.

Bookstart Baby is a universal programme through which families in England with a baby aged 0-12 months receive a pack containing two books, guidance on book sharing and a rhyme sheet.

Bookstart Treasure builds on the impact of Bookstart Baby. It is delivered to every 3-4 year old in England through nurseries and other settings. Children receive a gift envelope with a picture book and a booklet with guidance for parents.

The books are chosen by a panel of experts who aim to select books with content that is engaging and inclusive for toddlers and babies from all backgrounds. The packs provided to families are supplemented by guidance for parents through the practitioners delivering the programme and the BookTrust website, including book sharing tips and recommended reads.

Bookstart Baby and Treasure also include the following targeted elements linked to accessibility:

- Additional needs resources: Bookshine Baby and Toddler for 0-2 and 3-5 year olds who are deaf, Booktouch Baby and Toddler for 0-2 and 3-5 year olds who are blind or partially sighted, and Bookstart Star for 3-5 years olds with conditions that affect their fine motor skills
- Dual language books and resources to accompany Bookstart Baby and Treasure, which are available in 30 community languages for families who have English as an additional language

**Bookstart Corner** is a targeted programme for children aged 12-24 months. It offers intensive practitioner support to families to families with greater need for support to share stories, books and rhymes. The programme was developed and launched in 2011/12 and has been delivered by children’s centre staff in the family home and/or children’s centre. It involves four weekly sessions with a practitioner using carefully selected resources. For further information about the programme, please visit the Bookstart Corner pages and the Bookstart Corner evaluation pages, on the BookTrust website.

**Evaluation requirements**

**Objectives**

BookTrust are committed to the continuous improvement of evaluation practice. The aims and objectives of this meta-evaluation are:

**Quality assessment**

- Develop a quality of evidence assessment framework which is *relevant and appropriate* for bookgifting programme evaluation in the early years and reading sectors. Please note that the quality framework should be suitable for assessing evaluation that employs both qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Gain an independent/expert assessment of the evidence base for Bookstart programmes (Baby, Treasure and Corner), based on the quality of evidence framework. This would be used to communicate the quality and strength of evidence supporting
BookTrust’s work internally and/or externally as relevant, and to inform the design and commissioning of future evaluations

- Gain an independently produced quality of evidence framework which can be used internally, to assess the quality of future bids and evaluation projects

**Syntheses of findings**

- Gain a clearer picture of the common findings and recommendations across the evaluation of Bookstart programmes, through synthesis of empirical findings across individual studies
- Understand how recommendations have been applied to programme development and identify and assess the relevance of outstanding recommendations to the current Bookstart programmes, their models and the context in which they are delivered.

**Research questions**

- What is the overall quality and strength of evaluation related to Bookstart Programmes and how could this be improved?
- What is the overall quality and strength of evaluation related to each key programme; Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Treasure, and Bookstart Corner?
- What are the key findings and recommendations from the Bookstart evaluation studies?
- How have recommendations been applied, and how relevant are any outstanding recommendations to the current Bookstart programmes?

**Structure**

We welcome a proposal that sets out the best way to meet the objectives and research questions, but envision it would include the following stages:

- In consultation with Book Trust, identify inclusion and exclusion relevance criteria for Bookstart evaluation reports. It is intended that this meta evaluation will focus on England and include Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Treasure and Bookstart Corner. Evaluation of the accessible elements of these programmes should also be considered (i.e. additional needs and dual language support). Please propose a draft inclusion and exclusion criteria that is feasible within the time and budget available.
- Developing a quality of evidence framework that is relevant to Bookstart evaluations. This could include desk research into existing frameworks. This should include a framework to assess single evaluation studies, and an approach for assessing the overall body of evidence relating to each of the three programmes
- Analysis/quality assessment of the overall body of evidence and by each programme; Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Treasure and Bookstart Corner
- Analysis and syntheses of key findings and recommendations across evaluation reports
- Analysis of recommendation implementation, which may include consultations with BookTrust staff
- Developing outputs including report and quality of evidence framework for BookTrust use

**Things to consider**

- It is intended that the framework to assess the quality of each study will use multiple principles including for example reliability, robustness, transparency, validity, rigour and appropriateness
• It is intended that the approach for assessing the ‘strength’ of the body of evidence will consider factors such as the quality of evidence, as well as the size, context and consistency of the evidence
• The objectives for Bookstart Baby, Bookstart Treasure and Bookstart Corner are related but with some variation
• All evaluation reports are available on the BookTrust website, so no literature search is required. There are approximately 30 reports to be considered for this meta evaluation.

We welcome further suggestions and advise on this approach.

Additional information

This project will run alongside the development of a best practice programme model for Bookstart Baby and Treasure. Findings from the meta-evaluation related to best practice will inform this. This is being commissioned separately, please refer to the ITT to learn more.

Staffing

The research team should have a high level of expertise and significant experience in designing and undertaking similar pieces of work, preferably including the development or use of quality of evidence frameworks, conducting meta evaluations or designing and conducting systematic reviews and research synthesis. We are also interested in bidders that have experience in evaluating early years and bookgifting programmes, but this is not essential.

Tenders should outline how the skills and experience of the research team will cover these areas, as well as describing the skills and experiences of each individual (please attach brief CVs) and their expected contribution.

Working with BookTrust

BookTrust find that the best outcomes are achieved through strong partnerships and collaborative relationships with other organisations. We propose setting out a communication plan during the inception stage of the project. As part of this plan the contractor will be required to submit regular progress reports to a nominated BookTrust Project Manager. It is expected that contractors will raise areas of concern as soon as they arise.

Timetable and outputs

The following outputs are required:

• A report detailing the findings from the meta-evaluation. This should include assessment of the quality and strength of evidence, and a synthesis of findings and recommendations of individual evaluations. Conclusions and recommendations should also be included where appropriate. The report should be presented in accessible language.
• A standalone narrative executive summary detailing the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the meta evaluation. The executive summary should be presented in accessible language.
• A quality of evidence assessment tool/framework
A workshop to explore the key findings, conclusions and recommendations at BookTrust’s head office.

A possible timetable is detailed below with the fixed dates highlighted in bold:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inception meeting</td>
<td>w/c 4th December 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of inclusion and exclusion criteria, and</td>
<td>End of December 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development of the quality of evidence tool/framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of evaluation reports and any necessary consultation</td>
<td>January – February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report writing</td>
<td>March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft report and assessment tool delivered</td>
<td>End of March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report delivered</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop to share the findings</td>
<td>April / May 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Costs**

The budget for this project is £20,000 inclusive of all expenses. Costs should be exclusive of VAT but should state whether VAT is chargeable. Costs of different options should be clear (if applicable). Full cost details of any proposed sub contracts and how these will be managed should be included.

**Tendering criteria and procedure**

Tenders will be assessed based on the following criteria, please structure your tender using these criteria as headings.

A. **Understanding of the brief and the objectives**
   - Does the contractor demonstrate a good understanding of BookTrust and the project objectives?

B. **Research approach**
   - How suitable and credible is the proposed methodology?
   - Is there sufficient explanation of how the data or knowledge required for the approach will be collected?

C. **Project plan and timescales**
   - Does the proposal set out a clear plan for delivering the project on time and on budget?
   - Are there adequate project management and quality assurance arrangements in place?
D. Costs
   o Does the proposal give a clear breakdown of costs?
   o Does the approach and plan represent value for money?

E. Relevant expertise and experience
   o Has the proposal set out the role of each team member and included a summary CV?
   o What degree of technical and/or sector expertise does the proposed team bring to this project?
   o Does the project manager have experience of delivering similar projects successfully?

F. Risks
   o Does the proposal identify key risks and suggest effective mitigation strategies?

G. Ethical Issues
   o Does the proposal address any anticipated ethical issues and explain how these will be dealt with?

In the costs section, please provide:

- A clear breakdown of the cost and number of days allocated to each phase of the project.
- Staff costs for each project team member to be involved in fulfilling the contract (along with the day rate and number of days input for each project team member).
- Any administrative costs
- Fieldwork costs
- Expenses listed as a separate figure

The timetable for the tendering process is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITT released</td>
<td>16 October 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for expression of interest</td>
<td>25 October 2017 (5pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission deadline</td>
<td>10 November 2017 (5pm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype interviews with shortlisted bidders</td>
<td>w/c 20th November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful organisation appointed</td>
<td>w/c 27 November 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The closing date for receipt of tenders is **5pm on 10 November 2017**. A full electronic copy of the tender including any annexes and supplementary material in MS Word or PDF format should be emailed to research@booktrust.org.uk. If you have any questions on any details of the research brief, please Sian Eliot at research@booktrust.org.uk or on 020 7801 8812.
Appendix: Terms and conditions

Research contract conditions
The contract will be commissioned under Book Trust’s standard research contract terms and conditions.

Ownership of data and outputs
All data collected for the project should be provided electronically to Book Trust on completion of the contract or when requested. Data ownership will be in accordance with our standard research contract, which is available on request.

Data protection and informed consent
Contractors shall comply with all the provisions and obligations under the Data Protection Act, including the eight data protection principles and all subordinate legislation.