



Annual Review 2023–24

Accessible version

scottishbooktrust.com

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Our mission and our approach

Our mission

Our charity's mission is to ensure that people living in Scotland have equal access to books. Everyone should have the opportunity to improve their life chances through books and the fundamental skills of reading and writing. Access to books and a love of books bring many important benefits, from family bonding and advancing children's learning, to unlocking creativity, helping employability and improving mental health and wellbeing. We want to support all communities across Scotland, with particular focus on those who are vulnerable, under-represented and who need it most.

We also aim to ensure that Scotland's wide-ranging literary talent, both emerging and established, is nurtured and supported.

Our approach

We are trusted experts on bringing the benefits of reading and writing for enjoyment to people all over Scotland. Our programmes are designed to support a love of reading from the earliest moments and beyond, through all life stages; it's never too early or too late to begin a journey with books. We deliver both universal and specially-tailored programmes, working with a range of partners including libraries, health visitors, schools and other organisations. We connect individuals and communities, bringing them together to share and enjoy the magic of books.

Chair's report

In 2023–24, we celebrated our 25th anniversary. We marked this significant milestone with a parliamentary exhibition, 'A reading nation is a healthy nation', showcasing how books can bring so many benefits across all life stages. We spoke with over 60 MSPs, gathering their support and sharing our charity's work that takes place all over Scotland.

Our Reading Schools accreditation programme was launched nationally. Focused on creating a sustained whole-school reading for pleasure culture, over 400 schools are now accredited, with schools from every local authority participating. Our mission is for every school in Scotland to celebrate reading for pleasure by becoming a Reading School.

We continue to give children the opportunity to meet authors in classrooms, with our Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour, in-school writer residencies and residencies for children with additional support needs (ASN), all providing meaningful learning experiences through the magic of storytelling, reading and writing.

Our Bookbug and Read Write Count with the First Minister universal book gifting programmes ensured that babies, toddlers, three-year-olds and P1, P2 and P3 children in Scotland have books of their own at home. For younger children, over 20,000 Bookbug Sessions took place in-person and online with over 500,000 families attending. Thousands of families also benefit from Bookbug for the Home, providing targeted outreach for families living with challenging circumstances.

Our well-developed digital capabilities continue to allow us to extend the accessibility, range and impact of our programmes, including adding new songs and rhymes to our free Bookbug app in Spanish, Arabic, Scots and Gaelic.

Meanwhile, a fourth year of Digital Storytelling, with Macmillan Cancer Support, trained and mentored Macmillan's Digital Storytelling Champions and explored how they would like their stories used to effect change in cancer support services.

Book Week Scotland's theme of 'Adventure' was brought to life through Scotland's Stories, a collection of true short stories from people all over Scotland. We gifted 70,000 copies of the free book, *Adventure*, as well as partnering with RNIB Scotland to provide an audio version. An exclusive midnight event kicked off the week with the launch of Jenny Colgan's *Midnight at the Christmas Bookshop* and almost 800 events were held during Book Week Scotland 2023.

Our 15th annual New Writers Awards supported eleven awardees, culminating in a showcase to an audience of over 200 attendees from across the industry.

Evidence of the huge difference our work makes to the lives of so many remains a priority, and our new Impact Framework has strengthened our evaluation approach, to inform programme planning.

Our annual Christmas Appeal featured *The Gruffalo*, who also celebrated their 25th birthday this year. With the incredibly generous support of our donors, visitors to our online shop and publishers, we distributed over 80,000 free new books to children, families and refugees through foodbanks, hospitals, community groups and other charities.

During this time we also welcomed new trustees: Sarah English from Scotland House in Brussels, Professor Jo Gill from the University of Glasgow, and Bernadette Monaghan, formerly in charge of equalities at Glasgow City Council.

As our 25th anniversary year comes to a close, we look back on a year that has championed creativity, self-expression, equality and personal fulfilment, and we look ahead to a continued endeavour to deliver programmes and support of the highest quality and impact.

Andy Marchant, Chair.

CEO's introduction

Earlier this year I was invited to speak at the Goethe-Institut in Athens on behalf of EURead, a network of organisations across Europe dedicated to promoting reading and literacy. EURead's AGM marked the launch of their statement calling on Europe's leaders to recognise the ability to read as a fundamental human right and as essential to the protection of democracy – something that has been at the heart of our charity mission for the past 25 years.

I began by quoting three words from one of my favourite writers, Gustav Flaubert: 'Read to live'. To which we might add a further word – 'well'. So – 'Read to live well'. But what does this mean, and why should we care?

It is self-evident to us that literacy, from basic decoding to the higher order skills of critical literacy, is essential to modern participatory democracy. Why? Because the word unlocks human potential, and is the primary means by which humans learn, discern, expand themselves, contribute to society, and thrive. There is also a wealth of evidence that shows it is one of the most effective ways to break the poverty cycle. Reading and writing well are fundamental to human agency, just as an informed citizenry is vital to democracy. In this way, reading and writing well is synonymous with living well.

A recently-published Scottish Government report underlined that the percentage of children with language development concerns increases in local authority areas that have a higher percentage of deprived communities. We are well aware of the link between poverty, poor language development and illiteracy explicit, and we can leverage our expertise to propose programmed interventions that are targeted in geographically and demographically specific ways.

The work of Scottish Book Trust is desperately needed and beneficial and this has never been truer than in our current climate. Much of this work takes place through partnerships, including libraries.

New research conducted by Scottish Book Trust, in partnership with the National Library of Scotland, and the Scottish Library and Information Council reveals a sombre picture. Between 2015 and 2021, Scotland's librarian numbers were cut by at least 32%. One in three librarians reported that their whole service is at risk of reduction, and 82% reported a restriction on their funding and resources.

Libraries are beacons of light, illuminating communities and individuals through all that they freely offer by way of books, information, learning and entertainment. They are lighthouses in the dark. Without libraries, there is little hope of creating a better, more equal and more informed society. The librarian and information professional is a vital guide in our information-saturated age. Access to libraries means access to education and ideas.

As we round off our 25th anniversary year, we remain steadfastly committed to our ongoing mission of ensuring everyone in Scotland has equal access to books, putting the cultural superpower of critical discernment in people's hands, so that through reading, they may live well.

Marc Lambert, CEO.

We are 25!

Celebrating 25 years of Scottish Book Trust

In 2023–24, we celebrated 25 years of Scottish Book Trust – a national, independent charity that believes everyone living in Scotland should have equal access to books and the benefits this brings.

Our work changes lives through books, reading and writing, and spans all stages of life from babies and children to emerging writers and older people living with dementia.

Access to books and a love of books bring many important benefits from family bonding and advancing children’s speech, language and learning, to unlocking creativity, helping employability and improving mental health and wellbeing.

There have been many highlights over the past 25 years and [our timeline](#) showcases some of our favourite milestones and achievements along the way.





Scottish Book Trust aims to support all communities across Scotland, with particular focus on those who are most in need of our help. Explore [our map](#), which provides a bird’s eye view of a typical day at Scottish Book Trust and our work taking place all over Scotland.

Giftng books to families in need

In 2023, Scottish Book Trust continued its mission of equal access to books for everyone in Scotland. Our [annual Christmas Appeal](#) supported our core work and gifted additional books to children and families in need through food banks, hospitals, community spaces and other charities.

We know that the **only** books that children like Emily and Lewis have are the ones **given to them by Scottish Book Trust**. Because of the cost-of-living crisis, the situation has worsened. Without books, children are missing out, and the impact of this lasts a lifetime. Books bring families together, comfort children and inspire joy. They help children understand the world, do well at school and broaden their horizons.

We were delighted to secure permissions and support from publisher Macmillan Children's Books, Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler to use iconic illustrations from *The Gruffalo* and a festive image from *The Gruffalo's Child* for our Christmas Appeal.

<p>To Emily, there really is no such thing as a Gruffalo</p>  <p><small>The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Copyright 1999, 2002 by Macmillan Children's Books. All rights reserved.</small></p> <p>Too many children in Scotland do not have books at home. Books bring families together, comfort children and inspire joy.</p> <p>Donate now to give the life-changing magic of books to a child like Emily.</p> <p>scottishbooktrust.com/donate</p>  <p><small>Scottish charity: SC002799</small></p>	<p>Lewis has never spent Christmas with the Gruffalo's Child</p>  <p><small>The Gruffalo's Child by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Copyright 2001 by Macmillan Children's Books.</small></p> <p>Too many children in Scotland do not have books at home. Books bring magic, comfort and joy.</p> <p>Make sure no child misses out this Christmas. Donate now to give the magic of books to a child like Lewis.</p> <p>scottishbooktrust.com/donate</p>  <p><small>Scottish charity: SC002799</small></p>
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Our generous community of readers, writers, librarians, teachers, learning professionals and supporters came together and raised the funds needed to deliver **over 50,000 books** across Scotland.

Giving children the best start in life

Early Years Musician-in-Residence

During 2023–24, Scottish Book Trust ran an Early Years Musician-in-Residence with The Cottage Family Centre in Kirkcaldy, thanks to funding from Creative Scotland’s Youth Music Initiative.

The aim was to work with children and their caregivers to sing and make music together and explore the benefits of music on mental health and wellbeing. We tasked the musician, Kelly Laing, with creating a new song for the wider Bookbug community.

The Cottage Family Centre provides a range of support for families who are vulnerable to social exclusion. Kelly worked with 20 parents and carers who have children aged two and above.

Kelly gradually introduced singing and music into the free play that the children were doing. She used her voice and sounds while playing with the children to show how accessible music is, without fancy instruments or knowing complicated songs.

A powerful theme that came through in reflections was parents seeing the benefits and joy of music activities for their children, despite their own confidence being low.

Kelly observed the children and interpreted their emotions through vocal sounds, which can be heard in the background of the song – excitement, frustration, laughter, calmness, becoming distracted and toppling over. Kelly showed families how interchanging layered emotions are normal but sometimes can feel overwhelming, and music and song can help us to take a pause.

The message of the song reminds families ‘you are enough’ – your voice, your sound, your smile, your face. That’s what your wee one needs.

‘The first week most of the children could not sit for more than one of the short songs – they would get distracted easily and get up and go and play with something else. The big people tended to sit away as well, but through encouragement, building trust and relationships, offering options and consistency, everyone joined in more and the little ones got better at maintaining attention and joining in. By the end of the 10 weeks they took part in singing and rhyme sessions of up to 20 minutes.’

– Kelly Laing, Musician.

Bookbug module for Early Learning and Childcare students

In 2023, Scottish Book Trust worked with University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Edinburgh College, to develop a Bookbug Awareness Module for level 6 and 7 Childhood Practice students.

The module was designed to develop the skills and confidence of the emerging workforce and to improve speech and language outcomes for babies, children and young people in early years settings across Scotland.

It comprised of a self-directed online course followed by a three-hour trainer-led session. The module was completed by 55 students in the 2023–24 academic year.

Feedback from students showed that:

- **97%** felt they have a better understanding of how Bookbug can support speech, language and communication development.
- **92%** of students felt more confident in sharing stories as a result of the module.
- **100%** agreed that the module gave them the tools needed to apply this knowledge to their practice.

‘Booking training helped me gain confidence in reading aloud in front staff and make stories more engaging for children.’

– Student.

‘I learned on how sharing stories and rhyme can impact all ages and how it can help develop language and connection.’

– Student.

‘The impact was that it made me realise that I used to read so boring and dull, but then after I did my Bookbug Session it taught me reading with tone and impression is so much better and exciting.’

– Student.

Building reading cultures for young people

Sharing Sensory Stories

Sharing Sensory Stories provides a rich, multi-sensory storytelling experience tailored to children with additional support needs (ASN). Integrating sounds, visuals, tactile elements and movement, multi-sensory storytelling creates a supportive and engaging environment. It helps the children relax, promotes emotional wellbeing and positive social interactions, as well as fostering creativity and expression.

Schools and families often face financial challenges in accessing quality literacy experiences. One school applying for a **Sensory Stories Fund** grant noted that rising costs limited their ability to purchase necessary resources. Grants like this enable schools to acquire materials such as story sacks – interactive, tactile resources that help children actively engage with stories and learning.

Flexibility is a key strength. Sensory storytelling brings the magic of books and author visits to children in a variety of ways, in both mainstream and specialist settings.

The **Inclusive Stories Tour**, brings authors like Lisette Auton – who has lived experience of disability – to children, showcasing the importance of disability representation in literature, highlighting inclusivity both in participation and the stories themselves.

ASN Schools Residencies allow schools to host authors or storytellers at no cost, transforming both the student learning experience and the teaching environment. At Rowanfield School in Edinburgh, storyteller Ailie Finlay worked with children with autism, delivering outdoor storytelling sessions. By tailoring the stories to the children's sensory preferences, Ailie was able to foster deeper engagement. One parent noted how their child, even when facing away from the group, was always listening. Teachers also gained confidence from these sessions, with one teacher inspired to lead a sensory story on their own.

In the school holidays, the **Sensory Stories Summer Roadshow**, delivers live, immersive author events to children with ASN, tailored specifically to meet the needs of participating children, making storytelling more meaningful and enjoyable.

Along with financial aid, the project offers a variety of **resources and training**, and guidance on turning picture books into fun sensory stories and using songs and rhymes to engage children. These include **tactile books**, like *Getting Ready*, which was developed with input from families and organisations working with blind and partially-sighted children. Featuring high-contrast images and tactile elements, the book supports a broad range of additional needs.

The long-term impact of Sharing Sensory Stories is significant and wide-reaching. The project creates lasting memories and connections, often extending storytelling beyond school into the home. One parent shared that, while reading at home could

be difficult, sensory storytelling outdoors allowed their child to engage with stories in a new way. For many children who struggle with communication, sensory storytelling provides a means of expression that works for them.

Through resources, training, author visits, and sensory grants, Scottish Book Trust is transforming the lives of children with ASN and their families, ensuring that every child can benefit from the pure joy and power of storytelling. The programme is generously supported by The Mohn Westlake Foundation.

Reading Schools

The Reading Schools programme made some real gains for 2023–24. As the first accreditation programme of its kind, Reading Schools links in with the curriculum, empowering schools to build positive, fun and long-lasting reading cultures.

Schools can work towards core, silver and gold levels, with their accreditation lasting three years, and over the last year many milestones have been reached. Almost every local authority across Scotland has now received a Reading School accreditation for one of their schools, and over 400 schools in total have now been accredited.

This is a real testament to the excellent work of pupils and staff at schools across Scotland, where they place reading for pleasure at the heart of the school.

Reading Schools has demonstrably contributed to the development of a reading for pleasure culture in schools.

- **98%** of survey respondents saw an increase in reading for pleasure among pupils who were not previously enthusiastic readers.
- **87%** of survey respondents felt Reading Schools had contributed to wellbeing.
- **92%** of survey respondents saw an increase in reading for pleasure among socioeconomically disadvantaged pupils.

[Read our full 2023–24 Reading Schools evaluation report.](#)

‘From working with individuals to whole stages across more than one school, we have all benefitted from being part of the programme. We have seen improvements in attainment, attitudes and participation which have meant not only has the work been successful, but sustainable too.’

– Head teacher, Lanark Primary School.

Nurturing a reading and writing nation

Sharing stories from the people of Scotland

Every year Scottish Book Trust runs a writing opportunity, **Scotland's Stories**, asking people across the country to share stories from their lives that speak to a shared theme.

In 2023, that theme was Adventure, and the stories we received ranged from adventures from childhood, to times the writers challenged themselves to do something big that challenged them, and from times spent in extraordinary landscapes, to the adventures of starting again and taking a new road through life.

At Scottish Book Trust, we believe that stories are the glue which sticks us to one another. Telling the important stories from our lives allows us to reflect on and process our experiences, find others who understand our perspectives and enable people we have never met to look at the world through our eyes, if only for a moment.

Every piece submitted to us as part of Scotland's Stories: Adventure was published on the Scottish Book Trust website, enabling participants to share their stories widely. Some of the submitted stories were selected to be published in *Adventure*, a free book distributed across Scotland as part of Book Week Scotland. In 2023, 70,000 copies were printed and gifted during the week – by libraries and other Book Week Scotland partners, by the writers themselves, and hand-to-hand in train stations and shopping centres across the country. This gift of story is a core component of Book Week Scotland, connecting the story writers and the story readers for the last fourteen years. Over that time, the books have been gifted and used in a wide variety of contexts including bookshops, prisons, schools, community centres, and, of course, libraries.

Every year, we work with RNIB Scotland to provide an audio book with the stories read by the people who wrote them, bringing the voices of the collection to life for the listener and, in 2023, we made these into podcasts too. We also provide an accessible digital version for use on screen readers. For *Adventure*, we commissioned a few of Scotland's best-known writers to share their own story of adventure, including Len Pennie, Mae Diansangu, Sumayya Usmani, Shane Strachan and, in partnership with the Gaelic Books Council, Alistair Paul and Seonaidh Charity. We also commissioned two comics adaptations of stories for Book Week Scotland, from Zara Slattery and James Spooner.

'I cannot express fully the positive impact this has had on me personally. After years of writing, and never sharing my work, this was the first thing I ever shared publicly. To be included in this incredible selection of real-life stories has given me confidence in my own ability and has inspired me to keep writing and sharing my work.'

– Writer included in *Adventure*.

Nurturing Scotland's writing talent

New Writers Awards celebrates 15 years

We are thrilled to celebrate fifteen years of the New Writers Awards, which has been making an enormous impact on the publishing industry since 2009.

Funded by Creative Scotland, the awards have, since its inception, nurtured 189 awardees, who have produced 186 published works to date. In addition, there have been four published titles in the Next Chapter Award, which specifically supports an emerging writer over 40. We have also introduced further developments to the programme in response to industry changes and participant feedback, including introducing two new categories for Scots and Spoken Word in 2023.

In February 2024, we held our annual showcase at the Assembly Roxy, hosted by Heather Parry. Ten awardees from the 2023–24 intake took to the stage to read their works in front of an audience of industry professionals, previous winners and members of the public, and they received a rapturous reception. The awards are proof that with tailored, dedicated and flexible support, writers can find their way to success.

As part of their year as a New Writer, awardees receive a £2,500 cash award, which allows them to focus on their work, as well as a week-long writing retreat at Moniack Mhor, which offers time, space and the freedom to create new work in idyllic surroundings. They also have access to a tailored package of support, which includes mentoring from writers and industry professionals, training in PR, plenty of advice from Scottish Book Trust, and the opportunity to showcase work to publishers and agents. The Access Fund, introduced in 2020, has also been crucial in providing dedicated money to help remove barriers for writers.

'Happy Birthday to the New Writers Awards! It's been an honour and a gift to be among the writers supported these past 15 years. The New Writers Awards provided me with recognition, validation and support, and felt like a key milestone in my journey as a writer, as well as like a further welcome into Scotland's literary community and canon. I'm very grateful to the Scottish Book Trust for all they do, and proud to be one of their New Writers Awardees.'

– Nadine Aisha Jassat, New Writers Awardee 2018.

Total number of NWA publications to date: **190 titles**.

Total number of awardees published to date: **96**.

Number of awardees to date: **189** (including Gaelic, Callan Gordon and Next Chapter).

'The New Writers Awards are so much more than the sum of their parts. Receiving an Award was a pivotal moment in my publishing journey. Now as a mentor for the programme, I'm honoured to support wonderful writers make leaps forward in their

careers. Other recipients I've spoken with still feel the ripple effects years later. Put bluntly, I couldn't name another initiative that has played such a transformational role in the development of Scotland's new writers. Here's to another 15 years!

– PM Freestone, New Writers Awardee 2016.

Our research

Young People's Reading Project

Our research team have been collaborating with teenagers in participatory research, to really understand what's important and relevant to young people. This approach enabled teens to contribute their opinions about reading in their own words and draw upon their shared experiences to generate data together.

The **Young People's Reading Project** is a collaborative project between Scottish Book Trust and the Universities of Edinburgh and Dundee. The aim of the project was to understand how teenagers feel about reading for pleasure, and so the adult research team worked with an advisory board of six 13 to 14-year-olds to design and carry out the project. The findings were then used to create resources for education practitioners on the benefits of reading for pleasure and the best way to promote it in schools, particularly on how to motivate and supports teenagers in reading for pleasure.

Benefits of school libraries

Another strand of independent research conducted by Scottish Book Trust was to establish the ongoing impact of high school libraries and librarians on pupils, to demonstrate the value they bring to pupils beyond academic achievement. School librarians told researchers that to engage pupils, they try to gain a deep understanding of their reading interests and preferences, and to tap into some of their interests outside of school. They then use this knowledge to match pupils with books that will inspire a love of reading.

Research into teen reading has shown that pupils often find the reading they do in school to be boring or pressurising. These negative experiences can impact on their attitudes towards reading, and so librarians work to show teens how reading can be relevant to their lives outside of school. The research also showed that school libraries can be a safe space for pupils, where librarians work hard to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.

A Network Librarian says: 'I very visibly display things about neurodivergence, about LGBTQ+. I openly talk about those things and make every accommodation that we can for people and very much want to work with individuals to make them feel comfortable and safe in this space.'

As well as carrying out our own research to highlight the value of school librarians, Scottish Book Trust also put together an advocacy pack for school librarians.

Awards and prizes

Bookbug Hero Award

The recipient of the 2024 Bookbug Hero Award was Jane Putsey, a Home-Start Volunteer from Mull.

The Bookbug Hero Award recognises someone working with Bookbug who has used the programme to make a real difference to the lives of the young children, families and communities they work with.

Jane was roundly praised for all that she gives to her community. She has become a lifeline for families living in rural locations through her delivery of Bookbug. Not only does she deliver monthly Bookbug Sessions in Fionnphort and on Iona, she also provides crucial one-to-one support for families in the home as a Home-Start Volunteer.

Jane supported a grandfather who received 48 hours notice of becoming a kinship carer of his two-year-old granddaughter for over two years, and she supported an isolated new mum who said Jane 'helped her to breathe again'. She has been praised for forging relationships with every child who attends her Sessions and making everyone feel welcome and valued.

Our thanks to Walker Books for making this award possible, which allows us to spotlight the fantastic work that the people in our Bookbug Community do across Scotland.

'Wow, I feel really humbled to be given the Bookbug Hero Award. Bookbug Sessions are so much more than one person and I am just one part of it. I really appreciate the support I get to help me be a Bookbug Leader. It's a lovely thing to receive the Award and I am really chuffed.'

– Jane Putsey.

Learning Professional Award

The recipient of the 2024 Learning Professional Award was Lorraine McAdam, a classroom assistant from Renfrewshire.

The Learning Professional Award recognises a teacher or librarian who has had a powerful impact on the reading culture of young people and adults in their community.

Lorraine was not only praised for her tireless effort to boost the reading culture at St Anne's Primary School, but for her dedicated support for every child to find pleasure in reading. Over the last 25 years, Lorraine has become a beloved figure in both the school and the local community. As well as going above and beyond to create unique child-led reading spaces, forge productive links with the local community and deliver successful book-gifting events, Lorraine sparkles with

compassion, connection and joy – reminding the pupils every day of their skills and talents, and how glad she is that they are a part of their school community.

Our thanks to Browns Books for making this award possible and allowing us to highlight the wonderful work of learning professionals.

'I'm honoured to receive the Learning Professional Award from Scottish Book Trust as I know there are so many worthy winners all over Scotland. This was a lovely surprise for me and a double celebration as I celebrated 25 years at St Anne's this year. I'm so proud of our school and I enjoy seeing our pupils reading in our child-led libraries, which we created together. This gives the pupils a voice in what they would like to read and what kind of reading environments they would like to read in. Observing the pupils increase their vocabulary, general knowledge and strengthen their writing is so rewarding for me. I'm looking forward to the next chapter in our book to see what we do next!'

– Lorraine McAdam.

Looking forward 2024–25

In 2024–25, Scottish Book Trust is focusing on the following areas

of work:

To be the leading advocate in Scotland for the power, value and joy of reading and writing, empowering the people of Scotland and enhancing their lives. We will influence positive and sustained change in Scotland by advocating for the creative, personal, social and economic value and benefits of reading and writing.

Priorities include:

- Progressing our mission of every school in Scotland becoming a Reading School, building whole school reading cultures, while championing reading for pleasure which leads to other social, personal and educational benefits.
- Continue to support new voices on their writing journeys through our New Writers Awards, Live Literature and Author Residency programmes.
- Growing our Reading is Caring programme which helps people living with dementia and their carers to maintain caring relationships and support wellbeing.
- Investing in and developing our Bookbug for the Home targeted programme across Scotland, which brings the joy of songs, rhymes and stories into the homes of families who need our support the most.
- Deepening our collaboration with universities and other partners to continue to grow Scottish Book Trust's expertise as a research and information hub for reading, writing, education and other reading-related issues.
- Forging strategic partnerships in the UK and Europe that support and amplify our own advocacy, including EURead membership representing 22 European countries.
- Proactively developing and managing key policy, funding and national network relationships.

Extending the scope and deepening the impact of our work to reach currently under-represented audiences. While driving increases in universal audience numbers, we will further extend audience diversity and impact.

Priorities include:

- Building on our work with other Third Sector partners, such as food banks, to provide free books to families in need.
- Building on our popular digital services to improve accessibility and reach a wider audience across the country.

- Implementing the strategic plans developed by our EDI group to address access and inclusion in under-represented groups, while continuing to develop programmes targeted at areas and audiences in most need.
- Embedding our Theory of Change Impact Framework to evaluate our programmes so we can ensure that they are accessible, effective and make a genuine impact, as well as informing future plans.

Design and implement structures and strategies to ensure Scottish Book Trust's future sustainability. We will develop a business model and deliver organisational improvements to secure the long-term future of Scottish Book Trust.

Priorities include:

- Building on our annual fundraising appeal, prioritising unrestricted income so that we can invest more in reaching those most in need of our help.
- Continuing to shape and integrate our communications, marketing and social media profile to clearly position Scottish Book Trust as an independent charity with fundraising needs, and to communicate meaningfully with our wide range of audiences.
- Empowering our staff to develop the skills, expertise and experience that support continuous improvement in the delivery of our charitable programmes.
- Leveraging our website, CRM and wider analytics to inform, improve efficiency and effectiveness of our audience engagement.
- Increasing resilience through partnership by cultivating relationships with peer organisations.

Support us

Give the life-changing magic of books

By donating to Scottish Book Trust, you are helping to ensure everyone in Scotland has access to books and the many benefits this brings.

Scottish Book Trust delivers programmes and outreach work designed to support a love of reading in children, families and adults through all life stages. Your donations will help deliver more life-changing work. This includes creating specialised kits to support families to share stories, songs and rhymes with their children, sending tactile books to children with additional support needs, and gifting books to families who need them most through food banks and community hubs.

Ways to support

There are lots of ways that you can support people all over Scotland to reach their potential through reading and writing.

You can:

- make a [donation](#)
- [shop with us](#) and discover our wide-range of book-related products for all ages
- hold a [fundraiser](#) in your community, school or workplace
- join our book-loving community by making a regular donation and becoming a [Friend of Scottish Book Trust](#)
- sign up to [The Book Club](#), hosted by our CEO, to share your love of books and reading with other like-minded people and support Scottish Book Trust
- leave a [gift in your Will](#) and support the next 25 years of readers and writers

‘One refugee family were so delighted. They had nothing, but this has meant their boys had books.’

– Learning professional.

‘Library books saved me through difficult childhood experiences. I want every child to feel safe in a book.’

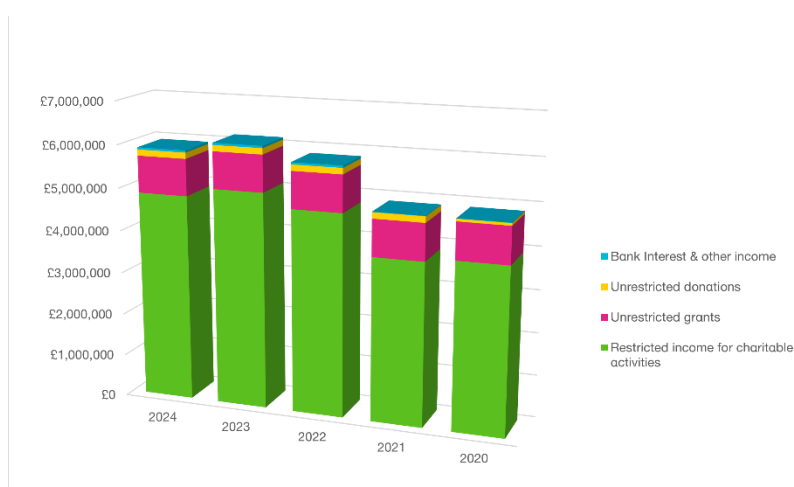
– Linda, supporter.

Financial review

In the year to 31 March 2024, our total income is £5.9m, a reduction in income from £6.1m (2023). Our unrestricted income remained static reflecting standstill funding from Creative Scotland and a challenging fundraising environment. Our restricted funds decreased due to the completion of the First Minister’s Reading Challenge Scottish Government programme.

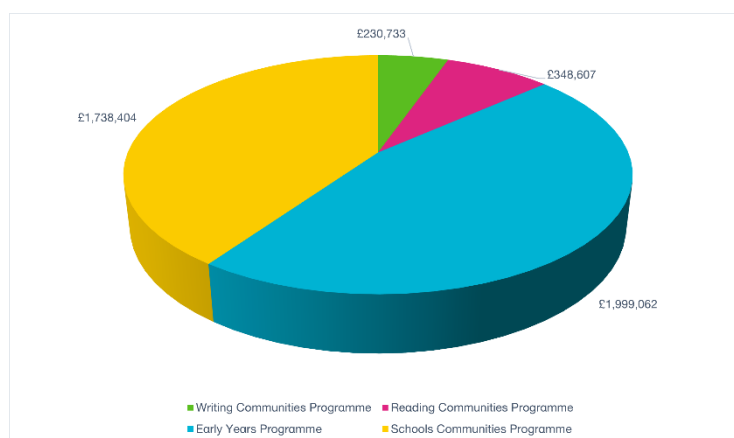
Income comparison

Of the total income of £5.9m, restricted income of £4.3m funded a diverse range of programmes for all ages, across Scotland, and includes fundraised income from trusts, foundations and corporate donors, as well as private individuals.



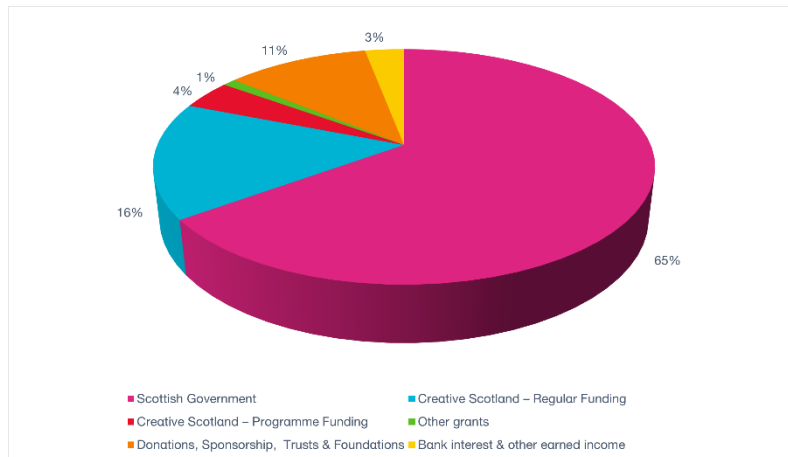
Restricted income split by programme 2023–24

As well as funding direct programme staff costs, our restricted income of £4.3m funds the purchase of books, print materials and other resources required for the delivery of our programmes.



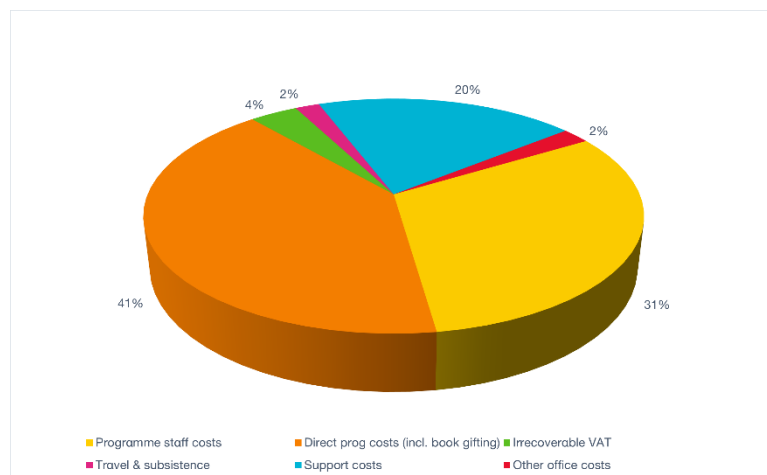
Funding split 2023–24

Total funds carried forward at the year-end increased from £3.5m (2023) to £3.6m. The majority of these funds (£2.8m) are restricted to specific programmes and represent advance funding for purchasing books and other resources early in 2024–25 to ensure our programmes run to agreed delivery deadlines.



Expenditure split 2023–24

Total expenditure remained static at £5.8m, despite the reduction in income with the completion of the First Minister’s Reading Challenge Scottish Government programme. This reflects the impact of inflation on salary and operational costs in a challenging operating environment. Staff numbers were stable over the year with an average of 72 (70 in 2023).



Our supporters

Thank you

A warm thank you to all of you who donated to Scottish Book Trust through our Christmas Appeal or at other times during the year, supporting the families most in need across Scotland.

Thank you to the following organisations for your grants, donations, sponsorship and in-kind support:

- Scottish Government
- Creative Scotland
- Acair
- Allen & Unwin Book Publishing
- Andersen Press
- Astra Publishing House
- Badenoch & Co
- Barrington Stoke
- Better World Books
- Birlinn
- Black & White
- Bloomsbury
- Bok Bok Books
- Boxer Books
- Browns Books
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- Penguin Random House UK
- Piccolo Press
- Puffin Books
- Quarto Kids

- Royal Bank of Scotland
- The Russell Trust
- The School of Life
- Scotland Street Press
- Scottish Adoption
- Scottish Friendly
- Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC)
- Simon & Schuster
- Social Bite
- The Stafford Trust
- Stòrlann
- Taylor Wimpey
- Templar Books
- Tippermuir Books Ltd
- Two Hoots
- Usborne
- Walker Books
- Walter Scott
- William Grant Foundation
- The William Syson Foundation
- The W M Mann Foundation
- World Book Day
- Young Scot
- Youth Music Initiative

Plus library services, local authorities, cultural trusts, Book Week Scotland partners, Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour partners, the Callan Gordon family and NHS Scotland for making our work possible.

Thank you also to the following people who supported Scottish Book Trust as members of The Book Club, including those who wish to remain anonymous:

Gordon Dalyell and Pamela Leslie, Marian and Mark Deere, Martin Adam and William Zachs, Robert Hill and Scott Lothian.

Our programmes

- Authors Live
- Bookbug
- Book Week Scotland
- Bookzilla
- Callan Gordon Award
- Digital Storytelling
- First Minister's Reading Challenge
- Ignite Fellowship
- Live Literature
- New Writers Awards
- Next Chapter Award
- Reading is Caring
- Reading Schools
- Read Write Count with the First Minister
- Scotland's Stories
- Scots Language Publication Grant
- Scottish Book Trust Awards
- Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour
- Sharing Sensory Stories
- 50 Word Fiction

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