



SCOTTISH BOOK TRUST LAUNCHES NEW CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT EFFECTS OF POVERTY AS CHARITY MARKS 21ST ANNIVERSARY

As Scottish Book Trust marks its 21st anniversary, the independent national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, has launched a new fundraising campaign to provide crucial support to vulnerable families and help fight the effects of living in poverty through reading and books.

From improving employability, social skills and family bonding to reducing stress and anxiety, developing language skills and doing better at school, the benefits of reading, even for a short time each day, are varied and life-changing.

A new survey commissioned by Scottish Book Trust reveals that in Scotland, under a third of parents (31%) read to their children every day. This drops to just 15% for those that were never read to by their own parents or carers as a child, underlining the importance and long term impact of reading with children from an early age.

The research also shows a direct, positive link between reading and mental well-being. 83% of respondents agreed that reading reduces symptoms of stress and anxiety, increasing to 94% when reading daily, while nine in ten Scots say reading for pleasure helps them to switch off. Almost two thirds of respondents agreed that reading helps improve family bonding, which increases to 71% for respondents that were read to regularly as a child.

Marc Lambert, chief executive, Scottish Book Trust commented:

“Reading and writing are fundamental life skills and without these we simply cannot break the poverty cycle. Books are so much more than a story. The benefits of reading for pleasure can significantly alleviate many of the effects of living in poverty, but those living in deprivation or difficult circumstances are far less likely to have access to books or opportunities to read and be read to.

“As poverty in Scotland continues to increase, we need vital support to reach more vulnerable adults, children and families to help improve their life chances.”

The charity’s patron, crime writer Val McDermid, commented:

“I’m a writer because I started out as a reader, and I’m still a reader today. Reading opens the door to imagination: it’s the first step on the road to change, not only for yourself but for the world around you. At Scottish Book Trust, we believe everybody should have access to the possibilities of books; to that imagination and that possibility for change.”

With one in five adults, and almost one in four children, living in poverty in Scotland, the charity has launched a fundraising campaign, Scottish Book Trust 21, to increase its work where it is needed most. For many children and families across Scotland, books supplied by Scottish Book Trust will be the only ones in their home. Scottish Book Trust 21 is appealing for regular donors to give £21 per month, which could



bring books to life for children in care, support families living in challenging social circumstances and reduce social isolation through sharing stories.

Scottish Book Trust aims to ensure everyone across Scotland has an equal opportunity to benefit from reading and books.

To find out more on how to support the charity please visit scottishbooktrust.com

[#ScottishBookTrust21](https://twitter.com/ScottishBookTrust21)

Ends

Notes to editors

Scottish Book Trust commissioned a survey of 1,000 Scots, including 500 parents of children aged 12 or under, led by Censuswide, July 2019.

'One in five adults, and almost one in four children, living in poverty in Scotland...'

Source: [Scottish Government](#) *Poverty and income inequality in Scotland: 2015-2018* report (March 2019).

About Scottish Book Trust

Formed in 1998, Scottish Book Trust is an independent national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home, including targeted outreach work with vulnerable families.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

In addition to the funding we receive from the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, we also rely on support from individual donors, trusts and foundations and corporate sponsors to continue to deliver our work and reach the people who need it most.

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