

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Business Sponsorship Information



Can you help?

Bracknell Forest Council is looking for a sponsor of the Imagination Library programme. This will make sure that books can continue to be delivered to children under 5 in the borough who live in low-income families or who are vulnerable to poorer life chances. **This is likely to cost around £6,250 per year, providing books to around 250 children.**

Why is this important?

Currently the borough has a higher than average level of Early Years literacy skills. However, for pupils eligible for free school meals (a cohort highly similar to the target group for this project), Bracknell Forest pupils achieve lower than the national average for FSM pupils and substantially lower than the average for non-FSM pupils. This suggests a particular disparity and a need for providing targeted resources to support low income and vulnerable families.

The pandemic has also had a significant negative impact on families; under 5s support groups were not able to operate and nurseries and learning activities were disrupted. School readiness has been reported nationally to be much lower for September 2021. Additional resources are essential to make sure the pandemic doesn't disadvantage these young children long term. One part of this is the Imagination Library.



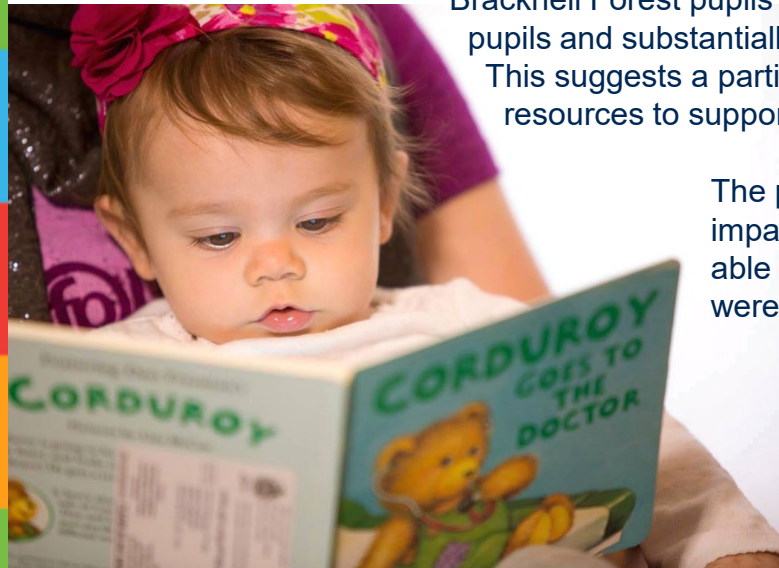
What is the programme?

The Imagination Library is an international programme founded and launched by Dolly Parton through The Dollywood Foundation. It aims to inspire a love of reading, increase literacy and promote the relationship between child and caregiver.

Each month, enrolled children from birth to age five, receive a high quality, age appropriate book in the post, free of charge. Books include traditional stories and rhymes, books by beloved authors and illustrators, non-fiction content, and newly published titles. Children will be able to build their own library of books to keep at home.

In Bracknell Forest, the council has considered the children where this targeted support could make the greatest difference and are prioritising those whose families are on low income and those who we currently work with in social care or early help. This means there are around 500 children under 5 who are eligible.

We are currently running a pilot year of the programme which has been well received by residents including featuring in local media. It has been a valuable addition to the wider support and recovery work of the council and has been incorporated into our services such as early help, the libraries and community learning.



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What does it cost?

The council manage all the operational aspects of the programme, alongside the Imagination Library. The scheme is subsidised by the Dollywood Foundation and so the remaining cost is **£25 per child, per year, to receive a book every month.**

The cost is directly related to those registered, therefore this is **no risk of overpayment.**

After the first two months, the uptake has been around 25% which is likely to increase further over the pilot year. Therefore, we estimate the cost to be around £6,250 per year based on a 50% take up. We hope that a sponsor will commit to **supporting the programme for five years** to ensure that a whole cohort of children, many of whom have been affected by the pandemic, can be included until they turn five.

We would be looking for sponsorship to start from **April 2022.**

How to get involved

To discuss this opportunity, please contact Katie Flint.
Katie.flint@bracknell-forest.gov.uk 01344 352217

What are the sponsorship benefits?

This is an excellent opportunity for social investment and reflects many companies' desires to demonstrate **corporate social responsibility.** In sponsoring this programme, you would be increasing the education and development of the local community. Parents are encouraged to spend time reading books with their child and supporting their child's communication and language. Improved relationships with children and the general increase in wellbeing and morale will all contribute to a **happier local workforce.**

Your companies name would be promoted alongside the programme name in any communications, and you would be identified as the sponsor of the programme. Your logo would feature on communications materials. Newsletter emails sent to the families registered to the programme can also include a sponsor's section to include short adverts/promotions from you.

It is also an option that if you sponsor this programme, we could extend it to your own workforce. Those who have children under five and live in the borough could also register and directly benefit.

The scheme is sponsored by businesses in many areas across the country, as each area runs their own programme. In Southwark Borough, more than £250,000 is funded by the company Dial A Flight who have a large call centre based in the borough. Nottingham also receives donation from businesses each year, usually donating around £5,000 to £10,000. Many other programmes are funded through the local connections of businesses within the borough.

We will share with you the **feedback directly from parents** so you can see the real difference that your investment is making. There are also several tangible measures that we can report back to you, to **quantify your investment.** This includes:

- Number of children signed up and number of books received
- Number of new library cards issued through this programme



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What do our families think?

Initial feedback from families has given an insight into the value of these books. Throughout your investment with us we will continue to provide this feedback so you can see the importance of the programme.

“ My mum tells me to read as much as possible with my son and that it's so important. She said she wished she did it more with me when I was little. ”

Parent of a two year-old

“ My children are so excited when the books arrive, it's all they want to read for the next couple of weeks. My daughter sometimes likes to read them to her dollies. ”

Parent of a three and four year-old

“ The books have meant the siblings spend more time together. My older sons, age seven and eight, now read the books too and join in reading to their little brother. ”

Parent of a four year-old

“ English is my second language, so it's good to receive books that are the right age for my children. ”

Parent of a three year-old

Feedback from Bracknell Forest residents, August 2021