



## Media Release

### Radha Chakraborty appointed Chair of BookTrust

The UK's largest reading charity, BookTrust, has appointed Radha Chakraborty as its new Chair as it continues its mission to ensure all children experience the magic of shared reading.

Radha will take up her new position in March, bringing her deep experience across the public and private sectors to help BookTrust achieve its ambitious aims.

She takes over the role from outgoing Chair John Coughlan CBE, who has led the charity through significant change and growth since 2018.

Radha has extensive experience in driving behavioural change at scale and improving the lives of people with low incomes, both of which are a key focus for BookTrust. She is currently Campaigns Director of DMI, delivering national and multi-country behaviour change campaigns to improve child health and cognitive outcomes across sub-Saharan Africa. As Chair of the Bell Foundation, she works to improve English language education for children and adults in the UK.

Radha was previously Vice Chair of BookTrust until 2024. She also brings experience of the charity sector, having previously worked for Comic Relief, and of the wider arts sector in her role as a Non-Executive Director at Screen Yorkshire.

Her appointment comes at an exciting time for BookTrust, which has just embarked on a new five-year strategy. It aims to help children from vulnerable family backgrounds build strong foundations for life through reading, to embed reading in the life of families with low incomes, and to ensure reading is a habitual part of the everyday life of all children.

**Radha said:** *"I am delighted to be rejoining BookTrust as Chair. The depth and breadth of our work through our thousands of partners across the UK is unparalleled, and the rigour of our research gives us a genuine understanding of how to get children reading from their earliest days. Our campaign with Waterstones Children's Laureate Frank Cottrell-Boyce is also creating a national conversation about how to ensure the life-changing benefits of shared reading are available to every child. This is vital work which we'll continue to drive forward in the coming year."*

The charity has also appointed Steve Crocker as a Trustee. Steve has more than 30 years of experience in children's services and social work, until recently as Director of

Children's Services of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Authorities and as a former President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services.

He is a non-executive board member for the Department for Education, as well as a trustee for children's charity NCB and now acts as an improvement advisor to several councils.

**BookTrust's Co-CEOs, Annie Crombie and Diana Gerald, said:**

*"We're thrilled Radha and Steve are joining BookTrust. Our thanks go to outgoing Chair John Coughlan CBE, whose tireless work has left the charity in a very strong position. We're already making huge progress in embedding shared reading for young children across the country, with the profound benefits it brings for their development and wellbeing. But there is more work to be done in ensuring all children, no matter what their background, can reap those rewards. We're really excited about what we can all achieve with Radha at the helm and Steve on board."*

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**Press contact**

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**About BookTrust**

We get children reading from their earliest days, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. As the UK's largest children's reading charity, we know that children who read regularly experience better mental well-being. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school and are more creative. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age. We work in every community in England, Wales and Northern Ireland through over 30,000 local partners to reach 1.4 million children every year.