

Business Leaders call for more businesses to take action to support the cost of the literacy crisis

Change your story

Dear Reader,

A child's earliest years are crucial to their development and life chances. However, last year over 185,000 5-year-olds started school without the literacy, communication and language skills they needed to thrive. Without this firm foundation not only will their learning, confidence and wellbeing suffer in their early school days, but they are much more likely to struggle with their GCSEs and be unemployed by their 30s.

Low literacy has lifelong consequences, and nine children in every classroom are already falling behind. Many will never catch up if we don't act now.

Children experiencing poverty are most likely to be affected. Where you are born and how wealthy your family is often determines where you end up. Together, we can break that link.

The disadvantage gap in early literacy skills is costing England over £800 million every year.

There is no 'silver bullet' solution. The language and literacy challenge will only be solved if stakeholders from across the business community and all political and professional backgrounds commit to working together to drive evidence-based change.

Businesses have a unique role and as business leaders we are committing ourselves to putting early language and communication at the heart of a national conversation, as well as supporting our staff and customers with the tools to drive change. Together, we can empower families with more opportunities and early advice to support their child's development in those crucial first years.

We are also calling for the Government to invest in high-quality early childhood education, and prioritise joining up our early education, family support, health services, and community and voluntary organisations to create an integrated early years system that offers consistent support from birth to school.

Today we are proud to support the National Literacy Trust's Early Words Matter campaign to support our country's most vulnerable children by helping them develop the literacy skills they need in life.

A child's background should not be a barrier to opportunity. Together, we can empower every child with the words they need to write their own story.

Signed,

Literacy Business Council



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