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**Call to action**

**Ukrainian–UK public library twinning programme**

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**Compiled by Larysa Bolton and Kevin Bolton, with thanks to Lyusyena Shum and Veronika Yasynska for their contributions**

# Introduction

Libraries Connected has developed a partnership with Library Country, the Ukrainian library association. We have spoken at their conference, held an exchange webinar for UK and Ukrainian libraries, and invited their Director to speak at our annual seminar. In May 2023, we attended the twinning event for Liverpool and Odesa public libraries which was also attended by the King and Queen, Ukrainian Ambassador and the Ukrainian First Lady. A case study below describes this twinning in more detail.

We consulted our members via Basecamp, and there is a strong appetite for twinning with Ukrainian libraries to show solidarity, exchange skills and experience and connect audiences.

We have developed a framework to support the twinning of UK and Ukrainian public libraries. We hope the twinnings will:

* Promote information exchange about language, literature and culture
* Foster distribution of reliable information to counter disinformation
* Exchange of experience
* Exchange of books and digital materials
* Collaboration on cultural events and connecting audiences

It is also hoped that the programme will provide a model that could be used with other nations.

**If you are interested in taking part in this programme and being twinned with a Ukrainian library then please complete the application form below. Please return to** [**info@librariesconnected.org.uk**](mailto:info@librariesconnected.org.uk) **by Friday 15 March 2024.**

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| Application form If you are interested in taking part in this programme and being twinned with a Ukrainian library then please complete the application form below. Please return to [info@librariesconnected.org.uk](mailto:info@librariesconnected.org.uk) by Friday 15 March 2024.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Name of library service/library |  | | Primary contact |  | | Email |  | | Telephone |  | | Which areas of your service would you like to collaborate on?  Please underline or highlight. | * Childrens * Business * Information and Reference * Archives and Local History * General Readers * Music Digital * Other - please specify | | Are there any Ukrainian cities or regions you are interested in working with? For example, do any of the towns/cities in your library service already have a twinning agreement or relationship with Ukraine. See below for further information on Ukrainian-UK links and Ukrainian libraries that are interested in being twinned with a UK library. |  | | Many Ukrainian libraries are interested in collaborating in the following areas. Do any of these appeal to you? Please underline or highlight. | * Challenging disinformation * Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff * Online events * Cultural exchanges (in person) | | Do any of your library staff have Ukrainian language skills? |  | | | | | |
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# Existing Ukrainian and UK Links

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| Ukrainian – UK Twin Towns | | | | |
| Donetsk – Sheffield | Horlivka – Barnsley | Lviv – Rochdale | Odesa – Liverpool | Stryi – Mansfield |
| Uman – Milford Haven | Vinnytsia – Peterborough | Zaporizhia – Birmingham | Luhansk – Cardiff |  |

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| Ukrainian Libraries interested in twinning with a UK library (to date) | | | |
| Poltava Regional Universal Scientific Library (I. P. Kotlyarevskyi Library), Poltava oblast | Sambir City Public Library, Lviv oblast | Konotop City Council Public Library, Sumy oblast | Library of the Lubotyn Vocational Lyceum of Railway Transport, Kharkiv oblast |
| Bryukhovychy Village Library (Branch 29 of the Lviv Municipal Library, Lviv oblast | Libraries of the Feodosiiv Community, Kyiv oblast | State Scientific and Pedagogical Library of Ukraine named (V. O. Sukhomlynskyi Library), Kyiv oblast | Berezniv Community Library (Branch 1, Mykola Bukhovich Library), Rivne oblast |
| Vinnytsia City Libraries – Central Library for Children and Youth, Vinnytsia oblast | Skhidnitsa City Library, Lviv oblast | Yaroslav Mudriy National Library of Ukraine, Kyiv oblast | Dibrivne, Horodnyanska Village Library, Chernihiv oblast |
| Skorokhodivska Settlement Library, Poltava oblast | Poltava State Medical University Library, Poltava oblast | Dnipropetrovsk Regional Library for Children, Dnipropetrovsk oblast | Shatsk Public Library, Volyn oblast |

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| UK towns and cities with established Ukrainian communities | | | |
| **South East** | **Midlands and West** | **North West** | **Yorkshire** |
| London | Gloucester | Ashton-under-Lyne | Bradford |
| Waltham Cross | Hereford | Bolton | Doncaster |
| Luton | Wolverhampton | Bury | Halifax |
| Reading | Coventry | Liverpool | Huddersfield |
| Oxford | Leicester | Manchester | Keighley |
| Hastings and Rother | Derby | Rochdale | Leeds |
| Eastbourne | Nottingham | Stockport | Sheffield |
| Hemel Hempstead | Newcastle (Staffs) |  |  |
|  | Rugby |  |  |
|  | Malvern |  |  |
|  | Northampton |  |  |

# Liverpool-Odesa Case Study

Liverpool Central Library and Odesa Regional Universal Scientific Library, named after M. Hrushevskyi, celebrated their twinning in May 2023.

The relationship between the two libraries grew out of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, when a number of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion found themselves in Liverpool. Most Ukrainians arriving in the city were mothers with young children, who recognised libraries as safe and welcoming spaces for families. Liverpool Libraries provided a range of activities around accessing information, digital inclusion and health information, as well as fun family activities. This encouraged Ukrainians to keep using library spaces as a social and wellbeing space.

Liverpool and Odesa agreed key objectives which were the inclusive sharing of experiences; book exchanges; challenging propaganda and misinformation.

In Liverpool, various events for different audiences were arranged, and were open to everyone, not just Ukrainians, to encourage inclusivity. Specific activities were held for children and families, with teenagers enjoying their own events such as movie nights and Q&A sessions. Events about books, authors and reading were held for wider audiences. An overview of these sessions, which can also be used as inspiration for planning events, can be read at the end of this document.

Ukrainian book stock was provided by the British Library and Libraries Connected as finding stock was initially very difficult, but identified as a key desirable. Books in Ukrainian are a reminder of home, especially when set against the necessity of learning English. Some families feel a sense of double occupation of language, with a feeling that Ukrainian slips as a priority, overshadowed by English and Russian.

Both services continue to work together to share learning and to develop events and activities.

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| Liverpool / Odesa Suggested events and activities | | |
| Age group | Activity | Description |
| **Children and parents / carer** | Watching cartoon series | It is advisable to choose animated series about prominent Ukrainian people, cultural figures, and historical figures. A useful recommendation would be to have a cartoons with subtitles in English. In this way, children and adults will be able to get a more of cross-cultural experience. |
| Workshops | The workshops are aimed at getting to know Ukrainian culture and traditions and build on themes suggested by the cartoon series. Suggestions include making a Taras Shevchenko secret small book, making borsch (where the child independently adds vegetables and forms their own soup), making a hetman's mace. |
| Dance workshop | Workshops in traditional Ukrainian dance are not only a reminder of culture, they also increase positive mental wellbeing through movement and music. Dancing activities also have a beneficial effect on health. |
| Book quest | This type of event is designed for 9-11 year olds who can move around confidently. Hidden clues lay a trail to the most valuable book in the library. This activity combines learning with an active way of spending time, and makes the library an even more interesting place with hidden treasures. |
| **Teenagers and Young Adults** | Thematic movies | Films can inform and educate. One suggestion is *Mr. Jones* (2019), which tells the story of the Holodomor though the biography of Gareth Jones, who along with Malcolm Muggeridge, broke the news of the famine in the West. |
| Discussion | This could follow the film screening. For example, for *Mr Jones,* there could be a discussion with the Welsh journalist Martin Shipton, who a biography of Gareth Jones, a man who became the voice of millions of Ukrainians and talked about the genocide. *Mr Jones* is a difficult film and the discussion can help to reflect on what has been seen and to better understand the context of life and what events shaped the future of Ukrainians. |
| Poetry slam | On International Poetry Day, a joint poetry reading took place between Liverpool and Odesa. It was a recorded video where the Ukrainian and British sides took turns reading poems in their native language. The video was accompanied by subtitles and was published on socials of the both libraries. |
| Adults and Older People | Involvement in helping in the preparation of workshops | Workshops and sessions need supervision and helpers. Volunteers can help with organising, event registration, meet and greet, tech support for audio and music (tech), set up and clear up, and help with workshops. |