



**Libraries  
Connected**

# MAKING THE MOST OF NATIONAL EVENTS:

A TOOLKIT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES



# INTRODUCTION

The Culture and Creativity Universal Library Offer seeks to support the work of libraries in enriching the lives of children and adults by providing arts and cultural experiences in local settings. This can happen through the everyday work of libraries but also when libraries engage with, and support, national events, using them as opportunities to spark curiosity, imagination and fun.

This toolkit is to support library services to make the most of the national events that take place – whether these be annual events, sporting events, awareness days and weeks or national celebrations. We have drawn together the experience and expertise of members of the Culture and Creativity Offer Group supported by Libraries Connected to share ideas and resources. Whether your budget is large or small, you can get involved!

We have shared an overview of ideas to help you get started with an introduction to the themes around planning cultural events. In addition, we encourage library staff to complete the **Libraries Connected Learning Pool Culture and Creativity Module** to build knowledge and understanding, explore case studies and understand how to link your ideas to the Universal Offers. The Module was created by Creative Arts East, following a tender process by Libraries Connected.



## 'WHY SHOULD LIBRARIES GET INVOLVED?'

National events attract a lot of media attention and are often in the forefront of customers minds. Engaging with these themes through your library offer can help reach new customers, amplify your message on your existing offer and introduce you to new partners.

Some big national events may bring opportunities for additional funding, access to funded high-quality activity and access to digital assets and resources you can use for free. These opportunities will normally be sent to your Head of Service, contact them to find out.

You can also sign up to receive newsletters and email alerts for most of the national events, not only will you get dates as soon as they are announced you will also get information about their plans and free promotional materials that are available. Many national event websites will provide listings pages where you can add library events to highlight and celebrate what you are doing, becoming part of the national picture!

## THE EVENTS



A list of events your library service can engage with can be found on the **Libraries Connected Universal Offer calendar** and below. Use these events to promote your library, its services and resources as part of your annual programme.

Follow the links below for the big national events taking place this year, to each event website where you will find resources and additional information about how to get involved.

### 2022

- > **BBC Arts – Art that made us Festival**
- > **Festival of Britain / Unboxed / Storytrails**
- > **The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022**
- > **UEFA's Women's Euros**
- > **Commonwealth Games 2022**
- > **Rugby League World Cup 2021** (playing in 2022)



# GETTING STARTED

Good quality tie-ins with national events do not always require a big budget. We all have a wealth of resources, enthusiastic and creative staff and volunteers to make the most of these opportunities.

On Learning Pool you will find the Culture and Creativity in Libraries Module, an excellent course to develop your knowledge and understanding in this area.



## A STRATEGIC APPROACH

These events are an opportunity to highlight what libraries can offer to their communities, across all the Universal Offers, not just Culture and Creativity but also Reading, Health and Wellbeing and Information and Digital. With a strategic approach, libraries can create programmes of activities that incorporate more than one event, so that the offer is comprehensive, and will maximise impact.

When deciding which events to engage with and what activities to run, ask yourself these questions:

- What are you already doing that could easily be adapted to link to an event?** For example, if you run Holidays Activities and Food Scheme (HAF) activities, these could become football-themed to link to the 2022 UEFA Women's Euro. If you participate in the Summer Reading Challenge you could include other event activities for children and parents and carers to engage with at the same time.
- What national events could you develop a theme around and use to create bigger impact?** For example, sporting book displays to celebrate the UEFA Women's Euro, Commonwealth Games and Rugby League World Cup all together.
- What local needs and interests could you target through the events to engage with a particular group, provide support and celebrate the event at the same time?** For example, targeting the lonely in your community through themed events such as the Big Jubilee Read or hosting a library-based Jubilee tea-party.
- What are local partners doing to celebrate these events?** You might be able to work together offering a venue and an audience with a partner creating content.

These are just some examples of the many ways to ensure engaging with these events meets the aims and outcomes of your service, supports the community and enables you to participate in national events more successfully.

## COLLECTIONS

The collections we offer (physical and digital) are one of our biggest assets. National events can be supported by creating imaginative displays that will increase borrowing and engagement in other library activity, whilst at the same time raising awareness and interest. This applies both in the library and online. Here are some examples:

- Choose stock that is linked to the theme in a broad way.
- Choose stock that appeals to different library users.
- Choose stock suitable for browsing, not purposeful borrowing.
- Position displays in prominent areas, such as in windows if they face high footfall areas, display boards in your entrance, shelves facing key walkways, countertop display units if you have them – it does not have to be huge just eye catching.
- Do not clutter with too many props or posters – less is more to create a professional link to the theme.
- Keep them topped up especially when there is lots of interest and books are borrowed!
- Consider a booklist linked to the event for customers to use – partner with other library services to share the workload.
- Some events have resources that include themed book lists, you can check on the specific event website for more information.
- Consider a digital list for your social media or website – you can do this using Pinterest boards, or your online collections service provider may have relevant lists that can support national events. Talk to your comms team to promote it on your website.
- Once an event is finished, don't forget to remove the display (physically and digitally) and update it with the next event!



## HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Local history and heritage can be a great way to engage people, linking a national event with local people and places. Anniversaries naturally lend themselves to a focus on the past, but any event can have a heritage lens through which people can view present events with a new perspective.

Your local studies collections will provide an excellent basis for engaging people with local history and heritage, but it's always worth while speaking to your local archive service, who are likely to have a wider set of resources for you to use. Working in partnership with your local archive service enables you to:

- pool local heritage resources
- run joint events or exhibitions to reach wider audiences
- mutually promote and publicise each other's activities
- apply for joint project funding to deliver bigger and better activities



## THEME LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Engaging with national events often means there are free assets and resources and national branding created by event organisers that you can use with your existing groups. On page three, you will see a list of this year's national events with links to the corresponding website so you can see what supporting resources they offer. Think about what activities you already run or could create that could be themed around them.

For existing groups you could:

- run a themed Roald Dahl Day craft activity for children
- run an Empathy Day class visit using the national resources and empathy boosting books
- offer an LGBTQ+ book list to your reading groups during Pride Month

National events are great for attracting new customers or to use as a launch pad for starting something new. For example:

- if you run a Places of Welcome, loneliness awareness week offers a great chance to promote it and use social media hashtags to get it seen in the bigger conversation. For example; #PlacesofWelcome #librarieswelcomeeveryone – check the event website or social media for the hashtags being used for the campaign
- is your Library Dementia Friendly? Why not shout about it during Dementia Action week?
- if you have always wanted to start a games club, try launching it during International Games Week
- if you are supporting a national event, is there a events website where you can upload your local events?

## FUNDED ACTIVITIES

National events are a great opportunity to consider running activities that may require additional budget, which could be sought via Arts Council project grant funds or similar. Discuss the relevant opportunities with your line manager or Head of Service to decide what may be possible. You will need to factor in time for applying for funding, as well as the capacity to plan and deliver.

Funded activities do not have to be complex – sometimes the simpler the better; but additional funds can help to create something special for your library service.

If this is your first try for funding consider how much money you need and where best to look, speak to colleagues who have experience of applying for funding for advice too. Larger funding bids take a lot of time to complete and there will normally be a wait to find out if you have been successful, so you will need a long lead in time. If you only need a small amount of funding then consider researching local community schemes and any local authority pots through your libraries' councillors.

Find out more about applying for ACE project funding [here](#).



# PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Whatever the size of your event, you will need to do some planning to give the event the best possible chance of success. Here is a summary of things to consider – you can find more detailed learning and discussion in the **Culture and Creativity Module** created by Libraries Connected in partnership with Creative Arts East:

## PLAN WELL IN ADVANCE

This is the most important aspect of any event or activity and cannot be skimmed over. At the planning stage consider:

### Are all the right people in the loop?

- The delivery team?
- Local staff?
- Marketing colleagues?
- Partners?

### What outcomes are you aiming for? What do you want to measure/evaluate?

- You should consider this at the start and be clear on what and why you are running a particular event.
- Is there specific data your funder needs you to provide?
- What and who are you reporting to?
- Are there Key Performance Indicators you need to achieve? (Such as a certain number of customer engagements)
- How will you gather customer feedback? A form may be provided by your funder.
- Prepare any necessary pre-event evaluation and post-event evaluation well in advance so you don't forget about it.

### Who will deliver it?

- Staff?
- An outside provider/partner?
- A volunteer?



### What do I need?

- Space (Room booking, library space, external venue?).
- Furniture (type and amount).

- Practicalities (access, a sink, a bin, a toilet).
- Equipment and materials (do you have these, do they need booking or purchasing?).
- Advanced info on where to park, how to get there, who will help.

### What do you need?

- Library Risk Assessments (You may have generic ones available that can be adapted for the event).
- Partner/provider risk assessments – these should be supplied to you before the event to allow you time to consider them.
- Public Liability Certificate from any external providers.
- Consider and put in place relevant safe-guarding procedures.
- Consider GDPR requirements in terms of bookings/tickets.
- Photography/video – you will need permission forms to use it in the future.

### Who is the event for?

- Adults?
- Children?
- Families?
- A specific target group?

### How will it run?

- Set times?
- Drop in?
- Will it be ticketed? If so, where will tickets be available?
- Is it free or is there a charge to attend?

## How will you promote it?

This is critical and should be planned early – it is pointless running an event if no-one comes!

- Create a plan for your promotions – this can be a timeline of relevant items such as when copy needs to be with designers and printers, setting up tickets, when press releases will be issued and timings for social media posts.
- Who will do the design work? (Always use professional designers if you can and ensure the funders and organisational brand guidelines are followed)
- Do you have a distribution list for posters/flyers? If not, it is a good idea to have one – but make sure it is up to date.
- Local marketing (Posters, flyers, word of mouth – make sure all library staff and volunteers know about the event before you send out posters so they can respond to customer queries).
- Make sure details are on your website and relevant event websites too.
- Use social media – add the event to your library service's social media accounts which may include, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; post your event to appropriate local Facebook groups, tag local journalists, radio stations and presenters into posts.

## Do you have a 'Plan B'?

- Who will do it if a staff member or provider drops out? Can someone else do it or will you have to cancel?
- Are there staff that can be called on to support if someone is off sick?
- How will you let customers know about any change in the event?

## ON THE DAY

- Will you be there on the day? If not, who will be, and have they been briefed?
- Have you got a list of who is coming? (Delivery partners, providers and participants)
- Create a call-sheet (list or timeline of the event) so you know what should happen and when.
- Are you set up in good time with everything you need? Do not underestimate the time required, it's always more than you think!

- Do you have the right number of resources for the numbers you are expecting?
- If it is a drop in event, do you have a way to manage the numbers?
- Make sure all the staff know what is happening.
- Arrange for delivery partners/performers to arrive ahead of time and make sure they are welcomed, have a space to prepare and know where the toilets are, and give them a secure space for valuables etc. (if someone else is doing this for you make sure they know what they need to do).
- Greet your participants and explain what will happen at the event.
- Take the opportunity to promote the library offer, mention things in passing, have flyers around for future events and mention the book stock that relates to the activity that they may like to borrow after the event.
- However you choose to collect evaluation, have it ready and mention it at the start. With a drop-in activity, you might have things on the tables or chairs or have questions on the wall with post it notes. Always provide a pen.
- Take pictures – if you want to include people you will need to use your libraries photo permissions form, or if it is a craft event, you can take a picture of what has been made which will not require permissions.

## AFTER THE EVENT

- Share what has happened with providers, participants, your colleagues and managers and online using the hashtag for the national initiative and tagging in your partners.
- Celebrate the success of the event in the library to show other customers what has happened. This could be in a newsletter or with a display, for example if you make bunting for a National Day can it go up in the library window and put some photographs up nearby?





## EVALUATION

- Depending on your evaluation requirements, don't forget to gather customer feedback as needed.
- Have a debrief with the team involved and review the evaluation.
- If required, write funder reports and make sure you use your findings and any learnings to inform your next event.
- Even if you don't need formal reports, write up what went well and what you would do differently – share this with colleagues and other libraries.
- Use your evaluation data to demonstrate the value of your library service to support future funding applications.
- If this is an annual activity start to think about planning for next time – the further in advance you plan the more successful the event is likely to be.

For more support about how to develop a cultural and creative programme for your library service, complete the Libraries Connected Learning Pool **Culture and Creativity Module**. This will reinforce your learning and deepen your understanding of the processes involved, in particular around commissioning for cultural events, as well as signposting to further resources and sharing useful examples of culture in action in libraries.



# WHY LIBRARIES MAKE A GOOD PARTNER

Libraries make a very attractive partner for other organisations running events:

- They are highly trusted places, with knowledgeable staff offering a range of expertise and services.
- The creative sector has product, performances and artists; the library sector has buildings and diverse audiences.
- Free to access public space, with additional spaces such as meeting rooms, auditoria, gallery and display areas available at low cost.
- The staff and their relationships with customers is the gold dust of face to face promotion.
- We have a bigger and more diverse reach than any other cultural institution.

Visit Libraries Connected to find out more about the value of libraries:  
[librariesconnected.org.uk/page/value-of-libraries](https://librariesconnected.org.uk/page/value-of-libraries)

## CREATING PARTNERSHIPS

When running activities or projects in support and celebration of national events, you don't have to do it alone! Why not partner with other organisations who can bring additional expertise and funding to the project and would be happy to engage with the huge value the library can bring?

Combining forces can be powerful. Do not underestimate the value of the library service and what you can offer. When working with partners, you will still need to do the planning, preparation and deliver the events, but you will have additional support through the partnership organisation(s). There are some important things to consider when working with partners:

- Always agree with partners who will do what and when – have this in writing so that you are all clear what to expect and what you each need to do.
- Ensure all partners have a clear understanding of what each wants to achieve and ensure the library service team know this too.
- Working with partners is a great way to develop new advocates for your library; take the opportunity to let them know the range of resources and activity available to all. Few people realise libraries offer far more than what they see when they walk through the door.
- Ensure your staff team know who your partners are and who to contact if necessary – if you can, introduce them to each other.
- If you are working with a private sector organisation, you need to be clear what you can both do in terms of advertising or promoting them, and make sure your Head of Service knows who you are working with.
- The design and placement of logos on promotional materials will always take much longer than you might anticipate, allow for this in your planning.
- Be clear from the start on who is paying for, or providing, what.
- If you need to share data with each other, make sure your permissions forms allow that and ask the customers just once.
- Make sure you have agreement from the partner to share evaluation with you.
- Value what you have as this can be fantastic for the partner especially if they are reporting to a funder. E.g. If you offer a free room for the project, this can be counted as in-kind support to that value, as can library staff time.





# RESOURCES

## TEMPLATES

The following templates are available to download as PDF files from [librariesconnected.org.uk/page/making-most-national-events-toolkit-templates](https://librariesconnected.org.uk/page/making-most-national-events-toolkit-templates)

With thanks to Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries for providing these templates for use with this toolkit.

### Risk Assessment document

### Customer feedback survey examples

- Children's theatre event feedback (in partnership with The Spark Arts for Children)
- Audience feedback

### Social Media

- Digital Media Consent form
- Local social media guide

### Marketing and communications

- Mini marketing plan
- Local promotion guide

### On the day planning – logistics template

### The Libraries Connected Culture and Creativity Module on Learning Pool

was created in partnership with Creative Arts East and covers why culture and creativity is important in libraries and how to plan a cultural or creative event for your library. You will learn how to select the right kind of arts and artists for your audience, along with how to manage an event on the day, and how to collect and use feedback, building on ideas introduced in this toolkit. Find out more here [lc.learningpool.com](https://lc.learningpool.com)

**Marketing the Library** is a Libraries Connected ACE –funded project that was created to help libraries to develop their ability to deliver professional, targeted marketing campaigns to a range of audiences. Find out more [librariesconnected.org.uk/page/marketing-library](https://librariesconnected.org.uk/page/marketing-library)

**Making the Most of Your Library** was developed by Leicestershire Library Service in partnership with Libraries Connected for volunteers working in community managed or community led libraries. Funded by Arts Council England and co-created with volunteers, the pilot found that the training package was more successful when library staff introduced it to volunteers. [librariesconnected.org.uk/content/making-most-your-library-0](https://librariesconnected.org.uk/content/making-most-your-library-0)



## USEFUL WEBSITES

These websites link to a variety of organisations and toolkits that will help you with planning activities around cultural events. There are many great places to look for ideas, support, and resources, including these national organisations. You can also look at other cultural providers near you.

**AccessArt** is a charity which supports visual arts teaching and learning. They advocate the importance of high-quality visual arts education for all, and enable and inspire this through the UK's largest collection of online resources and through CPD and training & network events.  
[accessart.org.uk](https://accessart.org.uk)

**Arts 4 Dementia** is a UK charity, working with arts venues to: provide training and develop arts programmes; empower and inspire people with early-stage dementia and carers through artistic stimulation; help preserve fulfilling active life together, for longer at home. You can list Dementia Friendly creative activity on this site and there are lots of free resources.  
[arts4dementia.org.uk](https://arts4dementia.org.uk)

**Arts Council** are the national development agency for creativity and culture. They have set out their strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.  
[artscouncil.org.uk](https://artscouncil.org.uk)

**Art UK** is the online home for every public art collection in the UK. We are a charity, and our website represents a collaboration between over 3,400 British institutions. Through our work, we make art available for everyone – for enjoyment, learning and research.  
[artuk.org](https://artuk.org)

**The Big Draw** is a pioneering visual literacy charity dedicated to raising the profile of drawing as a tool for wellbeing, thought, creativity, social and cultural engagement. The charity leads a diverse programme of advocacy, empowerment and engagement, and is the founder and driving force behind The Big Draw Festival – the world's biggest celebration of drawing and for a small subscription you can be part of the festival, list on their website and use their resources.  
[thebigdraw.org](https://thebigdraw.org)

**Creative Lives** is a charity who champion community and volunteer-led creative activity, and working to improve opportunities for everyone to be creative. There are lots of great case studies and ideas and you can look for groups or add your own group to the creativity map.  
[creative-lives.org](https://creative-lives.org)

**The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance CIC (CHWA)** is a national, free-to-join membership organisation supporting everyone who believes that culture and creativity can transform our health and wellbeing. They have a useful guide to working online and online safeguarding.  
[culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk](https://culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk)

**Eventbrite** is a global self-service ticketing platform for live experiences that allows anyone to create, share, find and attend events. Free for listing free events, paid for service for paid events.  
[eventbrite.co.uk](https://eventbrite.co.uk)



**Engaging the public with research: A toolkit for higher education and library partnerships** has been developed from the Engaging Libraries programme, which supported public libraries across the UK to develop and deliver public engagement activities between 2016-2021. From 2019 the programme focussed specifically on enabling partnerships with universities to engage the public with research. The toolkit includes: A three-step guide for libraries to start public engagement projects and partnerships; Case studies of successful public engagement partnership projects in libraries and an interactive map to find HEIs interested in working with public libraries on public engagement.

**The Family Arts Campaign** is a national Sector Support Organisation funded by Arts Council England and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to raise family engagement with arts and culture. If you register for the standards you can list your events here too.  
[familyarts.co.uk](http://familyarts.co.uk)

**The Heritage Fund** are the UK's leading heritage organisation working to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. Grant funding and case studies.  
[heritagefund.org.uk](http://heritagefund.org.uk)

**The Living Knowledge Network** is a UK-wide partnership of national and public libraries. Together we share ideas and spark connections between libraries, their collections and their people. Created by the British Library to explore new ways for libraries across the country to work as one. Lots of free webinars and advice and opportunities.  
[bl.uk/living-knowledge-network](http://bl.uk/living-knowledge-network)

**The National Archives Family Activities** gives online resources to engage families and children with archives, including resources for national events such as The Big Draw and British Science Week:  
[nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/families](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/families)

**Spark Arts for Children** provide extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change. On their website you will find storytelling toolkits and resources.  
[thesparkarts.co.uk](http://thesparkarts.co.uk)