

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 10 August 2023

## Response to motion by Councillor Heap - Library Collection Development (Reflecting Edinburgh's National, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity)

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note this update on the Council's library collection development, which has been prepared in response to a motion by Councillor Heap on 13 December 2022.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Evelyn Kilmurry, Head of Libraries, Sport and Wellbeing

E-mail: [evelyn.kilmurray@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:evelyn.kilmurray@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7894

# Report

## Response to motion by Councillor Heap - Library Collection Development (Reflecting Edinburgh's National, Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity)

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report responds to the motion by Councillor Heap on Library Collection Development, which was approved on [13 December 2022](#), on the steps that the library service have taken to ensure the expanded provision of library resources for refugees from Ukraine, and how the library collections have been developed to meet readers needs arising from the city's growing national ethnic and linguistic diversity.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 In response to a request from Culture and Communities Committee on 16 August 2022, a briefing note (Appendix 1) was circulated on 20 September 2022 which summarised the actions taken by the library service to ensure Ukrainian refugees have access to library resources in Ukrainian.
- 3.2 On 13 December 2022, Committee requested a report within three cycles on:
- 3.2.1 What steps have been taken to realise the aims laid out in of the 20 September 2022 briefing note to ensure expanded provision of library resources for refugees from Ukraine; and
  - 3.2.2 How the Council develops its library collections to meet reader needs arising from the city's growing national, ethnic and linguistic diversity, including how it meets the needs of its readers who are:
    - 3.2.2.1 Refugees;
    - 3.2.2.2 Asylum seekers;
    - 3.2.2.3 BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) people; and
    - 3.2.2.4 People for whom English is not their first language.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The public library service has a key role to play in providing services designed to reduce inequality, to celebrate diversity in communities and to provide access to multilingual collections across local libraries. Edinburgh Libraries recognise the importance of this role, through the creation and maintenance of a number of community language collections sited across the city, through the active promotion of those collections and engagement with community groups to ensure the continued relevance of the services in meeting local need.

### **Provision of library resources for refugees from Ukraine**

- 4.2 The library service has taken steps to ensure Ukrainian refugees have access to resources in their own language. £8,000 of the library service's media fund has been allocated to purchase Ukrainian language stock for adults, young people and children across both print and digital formats.
- 4.3 Library members have free access to collections of fiction and non-fiction Ukrainian language ebooks on the 'Libby' App, including a collection of dual language English-Ukrainian books for children.
- 4.4 In addition to the digital collections, new hard copy stock collections have been established in MacDonald Road, Stockbridge, Leith and Currie libraries with a further collection planned for Newington Library. Library locations were chosen based on evidence of demand and also to ensure a wide geographic spread across the city.
- 4.5 The Libraries Development Officers in these libraries have also been working with the Ukrainian community to look at ways to promote access to these collections, with Ukrainian language posters and flyers created.
- 4.6 In addition, officers are looking to develop a Ukrainian language libraries webpage to promote the collections and there have been conversations with colleagues in Ukraine with a view to working on collaborative projects to improve the promotion and acquisition of Ukrainian book stock in Edinburgh Libraries.
- 4.7 Edinburgh Libraries is also a partner in the British Library's Living Knowledge Network. This has resulted in a donation of Ukrainian children's books to be gifted to the Ukrainian community. Officers are working closely with the Ukrainian Club in Edinburgh to ensure that the books are distributed to those most in need.

### **Development of library collections to meet reader needs arising from the city's growing national, ethnic and linguistic diversity**

- 4.8 The library service seeks to reflect the diversity of the city's population with a total holding of over 13,000 stock titles for adults and children in a wide range of community languages. The largest community language collections held are in Chinese, Urdu, Polish and Spanish, reflecting the relatively high numbers of residents living in the city who read these languages.
- 4.9 All libraries also stock a selection of dual language and community language picture books for children which vary across branches reflecting different customer need.

- 4.10 Bookbug (a Scottish Government initiative for under 5's delivered in partnership with Scottish Book Trust) is also delivered in community languages including Spanish, Polish and Gaelic in order to meet the needs of families whose first language is not English.
- 4.11 Stock selection is undertaken by a working group of multilingual staff in order to best meet the needs of the city's growing number of residents who choose to read community language titles.
- 4.12 However, there are some recognised challenges in procuring community language books, including the availability of titles, and the increased cost of provision (e.g. a standard English language title costs on average approximately £6, whilst a community language title costs between £20- £30). Despite these challenges, the most current quality material available is identified and, where possible, made available to readers across the city, building local collections in communities where readers of specific community languages have been identified.
- 4.13 Work to develop collections is also undertaken in partnership with local community groups e.g. in McDonald Road Library, the Hellenic Community of Edinburgh donated over 200 Greek language adult and children's books which were added to the library's stock and the city's catalogue with transliteration assistance from the group.
- 4.14 In HMP Edinburgh, where the numbers of prisoners with community language needs fluctuate, the library service has responded to demand by creating specific sections of stock which are highlighted through the use of visual flags. Foreign language DVD's also sit alongside book stock to support easier access.
- 4.15 The graph in Appendix 2 shows the total numbers of community language stock available to borrow across the city's libraries:
- 4.16 In addition to community language material, the library service offers a wide selection of books written by BAME authors (with titles published in English and written by UK, American and European authors).
- 4.17 Library membership also gives readers access to a wide range of digital titles through the 'Your Library' portal. The portal hosts 444 foreign language books (251 Ukrainian and 193 Polish) within an overall total of 9,744 ebook titles. This equates to 4.6% of ebook titles in foreign languages.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Officers are continuing work to improve the diversity of stock collections and will be undertaking a demographic assessment in order to better target resources across the city.
- 5.2 School Library Development Leaders are working to develop inclusive and accessible stock collections across all secondary school libraries that better reflect the diversity of the school population through the "This Library is Anti-Racist" Project. The Project was awarded £29,000 by the Scottish Library and Information Council to establish a toolkit which will support stock collection audits, the creation

of diverse reading lists, book groups and the inclusion of student voices in stock selection, book group collections and reading list creation. The project is being progressed throughout 2023.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The cost of these services and development of services will be contained within existing budgets and through the funding received for This Library is Anti-Racist..

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 The library service will continue to consult and work in partnership with a wide range of community organisations in order to develop the collections to best meet local needs.
- 7.2 The “This Library is Anti-Racist” project will seek to engage with school students to reflect their voices in stock selection, book group collections and reading list creation.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Briefing Note on Provision of Ukrainian Language Book Stock in Edinburgh Libraries
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Graph of non-English book stock available to borrow by language

## Appendix 1 – Briefing Note on Provision of Ukrainian Language Book Stock in Edinburgh Libraries (20 September 2022)

### 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 At the meeting of the Culture and Communities Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022 it was agreed to circulate a briefing note on the Councils' plans to purchase more books in the Ukrainian language.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The war in Ukraine has led to a significant number of displaced individuals and families arriving in Edinburgh. The Council is committed to supporting refugees from the Ukrainian conflict resident in Edinburgh. Edinburgh libraries will support Ukrainian refugees by providing free lending collections of Ukrainian language books and Ebooks and ensuring relevant library services are provided through engaging with community groups and representative organisations.

### 3. Main Points

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- 3.1 Edinburgh Libraries have sourced and ordered the broadest selection of Ukrainian language stock for adults and children that is currently available from our contracted suppliers, whilst recognising that the stock is relatively rare on UK library supplier lists. We have sought to purchase and make available collections of books for adult readers, as well as a wide range of stock for children, including dual language materials. Similar to other library services across the country, we recognise that the supply of stock is currently not meeting demand and are focussed on adding to our Ukrainian language collections as soon as titles become available and as new suppliers come on stream. We have made contact with a number of new suppliers throughout the last few months allowing the service to start increasing stock levels. Additional titles are currently being added to the library catalogue and based on demographic information and current patterns of library use by Ukrainian refugees, those titles will be supplied to key library locations with plans to increase the number of libraries with Ukrainian language stock as availability from suppliers increases.
- 3.2 Staff have also negotiated with Badger Books to enable their free Dual Language Ukrainian English children's books to be added to our Ebook collection and these are now available through overdrive on our website <https://libbyapp.com/library/edinburgh>. In addition, our supplier has updated features on the library app to provide Ukrainian language as an option, and users can select the language as their default. Those areas of the app that support Ukrainian language have been translated.

3.3 Officers are also working closely with other council services and engaging with Ukrainian community groups to ensure that we provide services and stock that are relevant and responsive to identified need.

## **4. Next Steps**

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4.1 Library staff will continue to develop Ukrainian language collections of stock for adults and children as UK suppliers increase availability of titles. This will allow the service to increase the number of libraries that offer the collections.

## **5. Contact Details**

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Paul Hudson, Acting Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Officer (Libraries)

E-mail: [paul.hudson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:paul.hudson@edinburgh.gov.uk)

Tel: 07980144892

## Appendix 2 – Graph of non-English book stock available to borrow by language

