

Appendix 11 - Manchester Libraries Library of Sanctuary Highlights 2025

International Mother Language Day

On Saturday 22 February we marked International Mother Language Day - a UNESCO-sponsored annual event celebrating world languages and cultures - with around 200 languages spoken in Manchester it's an important day to celebrate with our communities. Hundreds of children and families joined us at libraries around the city for a day of arts, crafts and performance, offering fun, creativity and learning.



IMLD craft activities at Forum Library



IMLD at Central Library

Refugee Week 16 to 22 June 2025

Manchester Libraries hosted a range of activities as part of Refugee Week. The theme for this Refugee Week was 'Community as a Superpower', celebrating the incredible everyday. Ordinary and extraordinary. Kindness multiplied to become an unstoppable force! Libraries are places of sanctuary and welcome for all and Manchester Libraries shared an amazing line-up of events to raise awareness and support for refugees. Across multiple libraries, residents joined in Moomin themed craft activities for children and families or watched one of three films screened in libraries celebrating the diverse way we build and sustain our communities.



Refugee week craft activities and book displays

Central Library's Big Language Celebration

Central Library celebrated Manchester's linguistic diversity with Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham in a project exploring language as heritage which culminated with a

language celebration on 13 September. Representatives from the Hungarian, Portuguese, and Romanian Consulate, Colibri Mexican Folkdance, the Chinese Music Classroom at Chetham's School of Music, and others, shared their linguistic heritage through language-themed activities. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaHDUkxQ3aI>



Manchester residents attending Big Language Celebration workshops at Central Library

Building Stronger Communities Together Exhibition

This exhibition by Afrocats is a celebration of communities, using creativity to create conversation and draw attention to the unique attributes that make up different communities in the North Manchester area. Participants created artwork under the theme of community and shared similarities using paint, ceramics and mixed media. The project aimed to showcase the spirit of North Manchester communities and bring light to the diverse creative talent and voices that live within it.

A North City Library's Fun Palaces workshop responded to the exhibition theme of celebrate the unique and diverse qualities that make up the fabric of communities. Children used pictures of community workers to represent vital people who make up communities.



Building Stronger Communities Together Exhibition at North City Library

Manchester Libraries: Libraries of Sanctuary Action Plan (March 2024 – March 2027)

Update: February 2026

Action	Desired Impact	Who is responsible?	Link to criteria
Continue to make sanctuary seeker learning and training opportunities available to as many staff as possible across all grades and all	As many staff as possible are fully knowledgeable across the service	Philip Cooke, Libraries and Archives Lead	Learn

<p>areas of the service. This remains a key element of our training and induction plans.</p>			
<p>Continue working group meetings 6 monthly to review activity delivered and what is planned.</p> <p>This group will also explore ways to capture feedback/record impact to inform future events/service development.</p> <p>The group meets 6 monthly with progress reported to Philip Cooke, Libraries and Archives Lead</p>	<p>Ensure Libraries of Sanctuary is fully embedding in delivery.</p> <p>Be able to evidence that work and its impact more effectively & consistently.</p>	<p>Group members:</p> <p>Debby Bolding – Service Development Officer</p> <p>Service Development Coordinators: Paula Carley, Angela Rawcliffe, Leigh M'Rabty, Jodi Osborne and Mona Pasha.</p> <p>Next meeting in April 2026.</p>	<p>Embed</p>
<p>Share future library volunteer opportunities with sanctuary seekers. Increasing volunteering generally across the service is a priority over the next 3 years</p> <p>Continue to recruit volunteers from sanctuary seeker backgrounds:</p> <p>3 sanctuary seeker volunteers are supporting the Warm Hub at Didsbury Library.</p>	<p>encouraging people from a sanctuary seeker background to take part</p> <p>Volunteers gain skills/confidence and the library service gains feedback/experience from the volunteers to shape future opportunities.</p>	<p>Philip Cooke, Libraries and Archives Lead;</p> <p>Debby Bolding, Service Development Officer</p>	<p>Embed</p>
<p>Be part of the Streams Network – ensuring someone attends quarterly meetings</p> <p>Representatives attend NW Network and GM Sanctuary Seekers Community Response Group meetings</p>	<p>build connections with/learn from other organisations working in Manchester from other streams and supporting each others work</p> <p>Share what we are doing in libraries</p>	<p>Debby Bolding – Service Development Officer and</p> <p>Service Development Coordinators: Paula Carley, Angela Rawcliffe, Leigh M'Rabty, Jodie Osborne, Mona Pasha.</p>	<p>Share</p>
<p>Support Manchester City Council's commitment to</p>	<p>promote the value of the awards, and the</p>	<p>Philip Cooke, Libraries and</p>	<p>Share</p>

becoming a Local Authority of Sanctuary	importance of the message of welcome and inclusion across the city	Archives Lead	
<p>Continue to share refugee experiences through library events, activities, and exhibitions.</p> <p>2025 activity highlights include: Refugee Week film screenings and family craft activities across the city; Central Library Big Language Celebration project; Afrocats Building Stronger Communities Together Exhibition at North City</p>	promote the importance of the message of welcome and inclusion across the city	Philip Cooke, Libraries and Archives Lead; Debby Bolding, Service Development Officer and Service Development Coordinators: Paula Carley, Angela Rawcliffe, Leigh M'Rabty, Jodi Osborne.	Share
Maintain strong relationships with local partners	help us to deliver a strong, relevant offer for migrant communities	Philip Cooke, Libraries and Archives Lead; Debby Bolding, Service Development Officer and Service Development Coordinators: Paula Carley, Angela Rawcliffe, Leigh M'Rabty, Jodie Osborne.	Embed