

Welcome to our first ever issue of the HFU Chronicle. We are very excited to be launching this new monthly newsletter showcasing and celebrating all the good work and events that are happening as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Birmingham. We would like to thank everyone who has sent their contributions.

In this issue we will be looking at:

- Recent events
- New notices
- November Celebrations

An Energizing Evening: The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in Birmingham United People of Different Cultures

Igor Tishkin 26.10.23

Attending the concert with my family, we were fortunate to be part of a group of Ukrainians who were graciously invited by our lovely British volunteers. Firstly, Noran, who made it possible to organise this evening with some tickets generously donated to us by Birmingham Symphony Hall or paid for through a grant received from Birmingham City Council.

These dedicated individuals, who tirelessly work in Sutton Coldfield, everyday help us to integrate in the culture of UK by organising a lot of activities, including their every week English lessons. This gives us an opportunity to touch “the old Great Britain” and investigate the modern British Commonwealth.

One of such activities became the concert we attended last Tuesday.

The concert itself was a testament to the orchestra's exceptional talent and artistry. From the moment the conductor raised his baton, the hall was filled with a symphony of strong emotions and high energy, which we felt by every cell of our bodies and soul. Each note resonated with passion and skill, captivating the audience and transporting us to a world of great classical music.

As the evening unfolded, it became apparent that this concert was not just a display of musical prowess but also a celebration of unity and cultural exchange. The presence of both Ukrainian and British attendees created a sense of camaraderie and shared appreciation for the arts. It was heartening to witness the power of music in bridging cultural divides and fostering connections between communities.

The concert concluded with a resounding ovation, a testament to the profound impact the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine had on the audience. As we left Symphony Hall, our hearts were filled with a renewed appreciation for the beauty and universality of music.



It was a really heavenly and incredible, a really amazing evening. I wasn't able to catch my breath for many hours after this concert and this feeling lasted for several days after.

This extraordinary evening will forever be etched in our memories, serving as a reminder of the transformative power of the arts and the importance of fostering cultural understanding.

The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine's performance in Birmingham was a truly remarkable event.

In addition to expressing our gratitude to the British volunteers for their kind invitation, I would like to extend a special thanks to Olesya, the Ukrainian organizer who administrated this unforgettable evening. It is through the efforts of individuals like Olesya and the volunteers that the power of music can be harnessed to create moments of joy and unity.

In sharing this review, I hope to inspire others to seek out similar cultural experiences and embrace the opportunities that arise from connecting with different communities. The National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine's performance in Birmingham was not just a concert - it was a celebration of unity with Genius of Art, and the unifying language of music. Let us continue to support and cherish such events, as they have the potential to shape our world in profound and meaningful ways.



A Glorious Celebration of Autumn

On the 21st of October we held our Autumn Celebration at Sutton Coldfield United Reform Church. Over 60 people came together to enjoy each other's company, share a lovely buffet, and have fun.

A big thank you goes out to the staff from Refugee and Migrant Centre, and Spring Housing who gave up their Saturday afternoon to offer advice and support to guests and sponsors. We would also like to thank Sutton Coldfield URC who gave their facilities free of charge.

We had some amazing autumn displays including a pumpkin house with resident vampire dog by Kate and her children, a lovely dish of food from Olha, and face-painting by Anastasia to compliment the children's costumes. The children enjoyed board games and cartoons, while parents, hosts and volunteers had a chance to interact and make new friends.

Thanks to Olesia for all the hard work planning and organising this event. Everyone had a fabulous time.

This event was made possible by the generous support of Birmingham City Council.



Update from RMC

Below is a photo from our Team meeting on 24th October 2023. We were very honoured to have a guest speaker; Sara Jones from Birmingham University presented the findings of her research project: **Support for displaced Ukrainians in the UK - The role of history and stereotypes.**

On 9th September Sara will be at the fortnightly host online session from 7pm until 8pm to speak to any prospective, now and existing hosts and will be happy to answer any questions you might have. The link to the fortnightly meetings will be sent to everyone via email beforehand.





Refugee and Migrant Centre



rmcentre.org.uk

SUPPORT FOR DISPLACED UKRAINIANS IN THE UK

THE ROLE OF HISTORY AND STEREOTYPES

Date : 9th November 2023 (Thursday)
Time: 7-8pm
Platform: Microsoft Teams

Join us for a special Event with **Professor Sara Jones** from University of Birmingham



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Don't miss this informative session and engage in a meaningful dialogue with Professor Jones.

All Hosts Welcome!



Mokhammad's Journey



Above picture - on the left Dimitry Niyelovsky (HFU Coordinator) & Mokhammad Moin Khan (HFU Client).

I used to run a small retail business selling varieties of clothing in Kyiv, Ukraine, before Russia invaded and it became unsafe to stay there. As we all know war broke out on February 2022 and after deliberating with my family, we decided to apply for the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme as it seemed the best option to us at the time.

I had been in contact with my sponsor prior to arriving to the UK. However, upon arrival they did not respond to any of my calls. I was very distressed at the time. Luckily, I was placed in temporary accommodation and had a roof over my head and finally felt somewhat safe.

Shortly afterwards I attended the RMC office. I was very sceptical about what kind of support I would be given, as I did not feel that I needed support. After all we were very self-sufficient in the Ukraine and how hard could it be.

I attended their office and found that they were easy to talk to, treated me with respect, and took a real interest in my circumstances. I received help with all benefit applications, opening of bank accounts and all the practical support.

The thing I found most helpful was someone taking the time to explain the new benefit healthcare system to me.

In the summer of this year my daughter arrived in the UK. During this time, RMC made contact and explained that there would be a change in their service. We were allocated a Family Support Worker who was able to answer any queries that we had. Our Family Support Worker worked with us to determine what further support we needed.

I have now started attending ESOL and are also accessing support from the employment team based at RMC. My daughter was also supported to access the right level of education; this is something that was extremely important.

I am very grateful to RMC, and feel that they have supported me and my family integrate into the Birmingham area.

Birmingham is now our home, and we will be forever grateful to everyone who has supported us since our arrival here.

NOTICE BOARD

Centrala

CEE US!

What's on this month?

November 2023

MIGRANT PORTAL FOCUS GROUP We are organising several focus groups to learn about your experiences of using the portal and what content should be added to accommodate needs of newly arrived Ukrainian Community.	Wednesday 1st 4:30-6pm Thursday 23rd 6-8pm
ESOL At Centrala, we offer ESOL, (English for Speakers of Other Language) don't miss this chance to improve your English language skills and open doors to new opportunities.	Wednesdays 10am - 12pm 6 - 8pm Saturdays 10am - 12pm
JOB CLUB The sessions will provide 1:1 support with CVs, applications, interviews, and job hunting.	Thursdays 10am - 12pm
GENERAL DROP IN SESSIONS Offering advice and support for: social support; staying with hosts and moving	Thursdays 10am - 12pm

on; health and mental health; art and culture; opportunities to get involved and be active, and housing advice. Sessions will be attended by RMC and Spring Housing.

WELL-BEING WORKSHOP Find Your Place in Space: Art and Movement Workshop with Outside The Box.	Saturday 11th 12-2pm
WOMENS ART WORKSHOP An opportunity to embrace your inner self and prioritise your well-being, all while utilising the universal language of art. We invite you to join us on this transformative journey toward self-expression, understanding, and unity.	Wednesdays 12 - 2pm From Nov. 8th
EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOP Offering advice and support to enable Ukrainians in Birmingham to gain the skills necessary to find employment in the UK and learn how to navigate UK employments market.	Every other Tuesday 10am - 12pm
ACTION DAY Join us for a day of action with the Canal & River Trust to help them keep our beautiful canals clean and tidy, then enjoy some free drinks and snacks at our cafe!	Saturday 18th 11am-2pm

Birmingham NHS jobs fair



When?
23rd Nov 2023, 10 – 18.30



Who?
Refugees living within our catchment areas



Where?
Birmingham City Football Club

Partners:

We will work with a range of partners from both voluntary and statutory organisations which reflect the needs of our local refugee population. These organisations are subject experts and will provide advice, support and guidance for the people who come through the door to ensure wrap around care for prospective candidates.

Purpose:

1. To offer refugees career advice, CV and employability skills in partnership with local services and showcase the broad range of employment opportunities in the NHS.
2. To support refugees to develop additional and maintain skills that will enable them to support the recovery of their healthcare system when they are able to return.
3. To provide opportunities to ensure that the NHS workforce reflects the various communities it serves.

NHS Offer:

A walk-in NHS education event bringing together and supporting refugees to understand:

- What roles or careers are available in the NHS and in the local community
- Which NHS organisations are hiring in their local area
- What training is available to them and where roles can take them
- What support is available for healthcare professionals to meet the necessary requirements to practice in the UK
- What support is available to help them start their career within the NHS (and once in post) - this includes what support is available in the local community e.g., CV support, interview skills, housing, VISAs and childcare support.

The roles showcased will be multidisciplinary and include Nurses, Midwives, AHPs, and Support Workers



* **Support included**

Mental Health First Aid training



Train as an MHFAider® and you'll get three years of MHFAider Support and Benefits to help you feel empowered and confident in your role.

With MHFA England® training you will be accessing the very best evidence-based MHFA® course available. Our training is grounded in research and developed with clinical practitioners. It is proven to increase MHFAiders confidence in supporting people with mental health issues.

With our new offer, training doesn't stop when the course comes to an end. We provide continuous support for MHFAiders – well beyond your initial certification – so you are confident, empowered and motivated to carry out your role.

Why become an MHFAider?

By training with us you will gain:

- A deeper understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect people's wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- The confidence to step in and support someone to recover their health by guiding them to appropriate support
- Three years of access to the MHFAider Support App® with 24/7 digital support
- Access to exclusive resources, ongoing learning opportunities, and the benefit of joining England's largest community of trained MHFAiders

Why choose MHFA England training?

- 91% of people had a better understanding of mental health after completing their MHFA England course
- Since MHFA England was founded in 2007, our Instructor Members have trained hundreds and thousands of MHFAiders
- All MHFA England Instructor Members are accredited by the Royal Society of Public Health, meaning you can expect a quality assured and consistent training experience
- We are committed to improving the mental health of the nation

Become a qualified MHFAider!

MHFA England has partnered with Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) to create an internationally recognised MHFAider qualification. The RSPH Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid helps you embed your learning further. It is an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to the role and your expertise as an MHFAider, whilst furthering your own development.

If you want to know more about how we can develop your mental health support skills, get in touch today.

To learn more or book onto an MHFA course:

Please send email to: Tanya@rmcentre.org.uk

Tanya will let you know when we have upcoming courses with places available!

Training will be free of charge to Ukrainians and their hosts as well as professionals working in support roles. Adults only.



Mental Health Aware course

This introductory course raises awareness of mental health. You will learn:

- What mental health is and how to challenge stigma
- An introduction to some common mental health issues
- Confidence to support someone who may be experiencing mental ill health
- Ways to look after your own mental health and support wellbeing

For more info and to book, contact:



Tanya@rmcentre.org.uk

Free to Ukrainian guests and their hosts. Contact Tanya for upcoming dates!

Visit the MHFA England website at mhfaengland.org
Find us on social media @MHFAEngland



INVITE UKRAINIANS IN BIRMINGHAM TAKE PART IN FOCUS GROUPS!

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!



**MOSELEY
FOR UKRAINE**



Migrant Advice Portal
west midlands

Centrala

**Birmingham
City Council**



"THIS PROJECT IS PART FUNDED BY THE EU ASYLUM, MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION FUND. MAKING MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION FLOWS MORE EFFICIENT ACROSS THE EUROPEAN UNION."

FOCUS GROUPS FOR UKRAINIANS YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

Moseley for Ukraine and Centrala, in collaboration with Birmingham City Council, are delighted to announce an initiative that puts **YOU** at the heart of our efforts!

This autumn, we are launching focus groups among Ukrainians dedicated to understanding your experience, needs and challenges in the local Birmingham community. This will help us **CREATE A USEFUL ONLINE INFORMATION SPACE** for Ukrainians on the migration portal Migrant Advice Portal: West Midlands.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUPS?

During the autumn, Moseley for Ukraine and Centrala will be conducting focus groups among Ukrainians living in Birmingham. The duration of the focus group is up to 90 minutes. If you are ready to take part in focus groups and share **YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES**, ideas and problems, register your participation:



Moseley for Ukraine

Centrala



As a gratitude for the participation in the project, each participant will receive an £30 Amazon voucher. **YOUR THOUGHTS** are what make the Ukrainian community in Birmingham thriving and we would love to hear them!

For inquiries and more information, please contact:

Moseley for Ukraine
Centrala

moseleyforukraine@gmail.com
community@centrala-space.org.uk

Centrala

**MOSELEY
FOR UKRAINE**



Migrant Advice Portal
west midlands



AMIF UK
Responsible
Authority



**Birmingham
City Council**

Dates for your calendar - November

Bonfire Night - 5th November

On November 5th England celebrates Bonfire night. It remembers Guy Fawkes and his failed gun powder plot, celebrating the survival of King James I.

What did Guy Fawkes do?

- In **November 1605** he and a group of plotters tried to blow up Parliament and **King James I**. They used 36 barrels of gunpowder
- Guy Fawkes was caught in the cellars with the gunpowder and arrested.
- He was sent to the Towers of London, put on trial and executed.
- **Bonfire night** is on the **5th November** every year. It remembers Guy Fawkes and the failed gunpowder plot.



Dignity and Freedom Day 21st November

The Day of Dignity and Freedom is a holiday in Ukraine, celebrated every year **on November 21** to honor two revolutions: The Orange Revolution (started on November 22, 2004) and the Revolution of Dignity (the protest of students and public activists that started on November 21, 2013).

The holiday was implemented by the presidential decree of November 13, 2014, in honor of the beginning of two significant and fateful events. The holiday was established "with the aim of asserting the ideals of freedom and democracy in Ukraine, preserving and conveying to current and future generations objective information about the fateful events in Ukraine at the beginning of the 21st century, as well as paying due respect to the patriotism and courage of citizens who in the fall of 2004 and in the period from November 2013 to February 2014 stood up to defend democratic values, human and citizen rights and freedoms, national interests of the state and its European choice."

This holiday became a kind of successor of the Freedom Day, which was celebrated on November 22 in honor of the Orange Revolution from 2005 to 2011. In 2011, it was cancelled by ex-president Viktor Yanukovich. He also cancelled the decree of the second president Leonid Kuchma of January 21, 1999 "On the Day of Unity". Then, according to Yanukovich's decree, the so-called Day of Unity and Freedom was established, which was celebrated on January 22. It arose as a result of changing the date of the Freedom Day celebration from November 22 to January 22 - the date of the celebration of the Day of Unity.



Holodomor Memorial Day - Every fourth Saturday in November

Holodomor Memorial Day is an annual commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor, the 1932 - 33 man-made famine that killed millions in Ukraine, falling on the fourth Saturday of every November.

Traditionally on this day Ukrainians would attend memorial services and put up symbolic vessels of grain and light candles in memory of the victims of the Holodomor and other deadly famines in Ukraine.

It includes a national minute of silence at 16:00, followed by the lighting of the candle.



WHATS NEXT...?

We would like to share any feedback, so please do not hesitate in writing to ukraineb@rmcentre.org.uk with 'feedback' as the heading. We really want to know any suggestions you have in improving services or anything you think could be done differently. This will then, with your permission of course, be featured in a 'you said we did' section in future issues of the HFU Chronicle.

We would be very grateful if you can send us anything: for example, events you hold, a good news story, even classified for the December issue to ukraineb@rmcentre.org.uk FAO Sandra. Deadline for any submissions will be by close of play Wednesday 29th November 2023.
