

## Eurovision

The Eurovision Song Contest (also known as *Eurovision* or *ESC*) is an international competition hosted annually by the European Broadcasting Union. This year the competition is being hosted in NWE's very own city, Liverpool!

The first ever Eurovision was held in Switzerland on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1956. The competition featured the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, and Italy. Since then, 52 countries have taken part. In 1957, the United Kingdom joined in and has competed every year since. The UK has come first in the competition 5 times, finished second 16 times and has the longest-running string of top 5 placings. In 2000, a new rule came into play in the competition. This rule stated that the newly formed 'Big 4' could go straight through to the finals. The Big 4 featured the countries that make the biggest financial contributions to the European Broadcasting Union. The UK was included in this, alongside France, Spain, and Germany. In 2011, the Big 4 became the 'Big 5', now featuring Italy.

In 2003, a new version of Eurovision was created for participants aged 9-14. This is known as 'Junior Eurovision' and the UK is sadly yet to win. In 2023, Junior Eurovision is being held in France.

In 2022, Ukraine won Eurovision with their song '**Stefania**' (<https://youtu.be/F1fl60ypdLs>). The UK came in second with '**Space Man**', performed by Sam Ryder ([https://youtu.be/RZ0hqX\\_92zl](https://youtu.be/RZ0hqX_92zl)). Due to the devastating current situation in Ukraine, the UK has agreed to host Eurovision 2023, with the city of Liverpool being chosen. This will be the 67<sup>th</sup> Eurovision and the slogan is 'United by Music', representing the unique partnership between the UK and Ukraine as well as the origins of the competition, bringing Europe closer! A vibrant, wider identity has been developed for the contest this year. The colours represent the UK and Ukraine flags, whilst the hearts represent '*millions of heartbeats as one*'. The grand finale of the contest will take to screens around the globe on 13<sup>th</sup> May 23. Semi-finales will take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 23 and the 11<sup>th</sup> May 23. Plenty of Eurovision-themed events are taking place around Liverpool in the lead-up to the big day. Girlguiding North West England has also created its own competition for units within the Region to take part in!