



## London Museum Development

# Diversity Matters Programme

### 2018-2022

London Museum Development's (LMD's) Diversity Matters Programme encourages London's non-national museums to embrace Arts Council England's [Creative Case for Diversity](#) and engage a more diverse range of visitors with the collections they hold, as well as support them with long standing issues about the diversity of their boards and workforce. Over the four years London's non-national museums will be encouraged to make diversity a key issue in relation to the programming, audience development, leadership and workforce of museums. The national agenda focuses on increasing opportunities for people from protected characteristic groups<sup>1</sup> and overcoming the challenges and the barriers to participation and engagement across socio-economic barriers and across geographic location.

As part of the wider programme, LMD asked museums to share their experiences of developing responsive and diverse programmes, exhibitions, collections, audience initiatives, workforce and trustee boards. The following case study is showcased on the website as it addresses one of the four key areas of diversity practice:

- How museums have worked with its diverse visitors to diversify its public programmes, events, exhibitions and collections to ensure it is more responsive to its respective local community
- How museums have reached more diverse audiences and ensured its audience is more representative of its respective local community
- How museums have developed a more diverse board of trustees that is more representative of its respective local community.
- How museums have recruited and retained a diverse workforce which is more representative of its respective local community.

## Royal College of Nurses Library & Archive Service Case Study



### Project Title:

Hidden in Plain Sight – Celebrating Nursing Diversity

<sup>1</sup> Diversity is defined by Arts Council England through protected characteristic groups, as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty 2011. These protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation as well as class and socio-economic status.

<b>Project Timescales:</b>	December 2016 – March 2018
<b>Project Budget:</b>	£14,328 <i>This project was funded internally by the Royal College of Nurses Library &amp; Archive Service</i>
<b>Area of diversity practice:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with diverse visitors to produce, present and distribute its public programmes, events, exhibitions and collections to ensure it is more responsive to its respective local community</li> <li>Reaching diverse audiences to ensure its audience is more representative of its respective local community</li> </ul>
<b>Protected characteristic group museum worked with:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability</li> <li>Gender reassignment</li> <li>Race</li> <li>Sexual orientation</li> </ul>
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Photograph of exhibition

**What were the project's aims?**

The project had the following aims:

- To expand the RCN's collection to include a larger number of photographs, personal papers, publications and oral histories relating to the lives and experiences of BAME, LGBT+ and disabled nurses
- To showcase the breadth of the RCN's collection and the history of the RCN in relation to equality and diversity
- To celebrate the lives and achievements of BAME and LGBT+ nurses and nurses with disabilities and raise awareness of discrimination past and present
- To make a public statement about the RCN's commitment to equality and diversity
- To provide a platform for discussion and debate around diversity in nursing past, present and future, to highlight lessons learnt from past experiences and inform the future of health care

## Who did the museum work with?

The Library and Archive team worked with a core group of RCN staff and members to develop exhibition content and expand our collections: RCN Diversity and Equalities Co-ordinator Wendy Irwin, RCN Peer Support (a forum for disabled members) project officer Holly Chadd and RCN History of Nursing Society members, nurses Dianne Yarwood and Panos Poimenidis (also a member of the Guy's & St Thomas' staff LGBT Forum).

They collected and displayed material across three themes, all of which were represented in our advisory group – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) nurses, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans nurses (LGBT+) and D/deaf nurses. Through contacts of their core team they involved high profile nurses, such as Professor Dame Elizabeth Anionwu and Dr Lola Oni.

One important new group they worked with was Deaf nurses, via the National Deaf Services (London) based at Springfield Hospital. They decided to work with this group to highlight the achievements of Deaf nurses – and challenges faced by Deaf people in training and qualifying as nurses – as this topic had previously been raised with the Diversity and Equalities team by a number of nurses. Through a nurse who had already been in touch with the RCN they arranged a meeting at Springfield and developed a close working relationship with Deaf Advisor Herbert Klein and his nursing colleagues.

## What did the project entail?

The RCN has a strategic commitment to being a world-class champion of diversity, equality and human rights in the health and social care sector. Their work on this area has concentrated on tackling workplace discrimination as well as highlighted the continuing contribution made by diverse groups to the art and science of nursing. This project aimed to expand this work, increasing the diversity of the Library and Archive collection and highlighting a breadth of contributions to nursing. Their project group met on three main occasions, and remained in email contact between meetings. The first meeting was to plan the themes and aims for the exhibition. The second meeting took place in London, to explore the RCN printed collections and develop project themes and ideas for associated events. The third meeting was a visit to the RCN archives in Edinburgh to identify material already in the collections, as well as potential gaps.

Group members took responsibility for drafting different parts of the exhibition text, and all edits and designs were shared with the whole group for comment. The final exhibition included direct quotes and oral history clips of all involved, so that individual voices and nursing experiences were showcased to the public. Library and Archive staff also met with other groups and individuals involved

in specific areas of exhibition content. This included two meetings at Springfield Hospital with Deaf staff, discussing the exhibition themes and gathering content. At the second meeting, they filmed oral history interviews in British Sign Language with staff, including the first Deaf qualified nurse in the NHS. The videos were then subtitled, with extracts made available as part of the exhibition, and the full interviews deposited in the RCN Archive. Working with these external staff networks was essential to successfully collecting material as part of the project.

## What did the project achieve?

Outputs included:

- 6,992 visited the exhibition
- The RCN Library and Archive collected 11 new oral histories and 3 personal donations to the archive. Three oral histories were in British Sign Language: the first BSL interviews in the RCN Collection. Many of these stories were showcased in the exhibition, alongside existing nursing stories from the RCN collections, such as the LGBT story of First World War nurses Cathlin Du Sautoy and Hermione Blackwood.
- 675 visited attended 11 public programme events, in London and one in Newcastle, including 120 visitors to two BSL events. Of these attendees 32% were RCN members and 68% were non-RCN members (so members of the public)
- The RCN also partnered with an RCN Black History Month conference in Birmingham

Outcomes included:

- The exhibition celebrated the lives and achievements of BAME, LGBT+ and disabled nurses through events highlighting the diverse contributions of nurses. Speakers included trans nurses, nurses with hidden disabilities and lesbian health care workers and the series was launched by Yvonne Coghill OBE, Director of the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard. Their events offered a platform for audience debate about diversity in nursing past, present and future, with historians speaking alongside current practitioners
- In addition they raised awareness of discrimination past and present by showcasing the development of Deaf nursing training and the challenges Deaf nurses face. They also highlighted how being disabled affects nurses personally using contributions from the RCN's Peer Support Group. Their BSL events enabled discussion of Deaf history outside deaf institutions, an unusual combination that attendees commented positively about
- They made a public statement about the RCN's commitment to equality and diversity by improving accessibility to their public programme – large print exhibition guides, access details on all event listings, 4 events with live subtitles and 2 BSL interpreted events.
- They held social media campaigns to generate interest in the Library and Archives commitment to diverse collecting, and attended events to promote the topic, such as the RCN West Midlands' Black History Month conference attended by 150 people. They have maintained strong links with Guy's and St Thomas' LGBT staff forum, Healthy Deaf Minds and Springfield University Hospital
- A key outcome was developing strong links with D/deaf nurses, including Springfield Hospital's Bluebell Ward and Healthy Deaf Minds. As a result of this project, they now have new repeat visitors to our public programme who use live subtitling, BSL and the hearing loop at our venue.

## What impact did the project have?

- Accessible events are now part of their core programme, reaching healthcare workers who could not previously access RCN activities. As a result of one of these events they developed a

partnership with Healthy Deaf Minds, hosting a careers event with Deaf healthcare workers, attended by 116 people

- Their model for exhibition working has improved, offering them a way to involve a greater number of contributors and showcase a wider range of nursing stories. Whilst the many contributions made this exhibition more challenging to organise, it led to a rich display, something they aim to repeat in future exhibitions
- In particular, they worked with more external contributors. Deaf Advisor Herbert Klein was integral to their relationship with Springfield Hospital and RCN members based there. They included a poem in the exhibition by Deaf Poet Richard D France, who also performed at the event Deaf Poets Society. Dr Joanna Atkinson, a Deaf neuropsychologist gave permissions for them to showcase her toolkit for diagnosing schizophrenia in Deaf people. Researcher Jane Mackelworth advised on the LGBT history exhibition content and spoke at an event alongside the Chair of Guy's and St Thomas's LGBT forum, Jayne King. All strong contacts for future programmes
- Finally, the project has resulted in better disability awareness amongst the library team. Following Disability Confidence training with Nick Goss Consultancy, the team gained greater knowledge for supporting members with disabilities or additional needs. This has led to improved accessibility provisions within their services.

### **What lessons did the museum learn from the project?**

The Library & Archive felt it learning the following lesson:

- The project highlighted how diversity is made up of individuals rather than groups of people. For example, the exhibition research process exposed fractions within the D/deaf community and the difference between Deaf and deaf, or between hearing aid users and the BSL community. They combated this by showcasing voices from a variety of individuals, rather than preconceived groups. Some stories produced very different conclusions: enrolled nurse training was often undervalued because it was seen as a 'fast track' for overseas nurses. Yet, for deaf nurse Helen Cherry, it was a way in to the profession. It was also a challenge to represent everyone in the LGBTQ nursing community. Events like *Thinking critically about gender* helped this, by looking at trans nursing and gender binaries. A series of smaller more focused projects might have been easier to manage
- They had a lower response to the collections drive than anticipated, resulting in fewer donations than hoped for. This was despite the project being well planned and marketed. This may have been due to other collecting projects taking place. In future, they aim to develop a way of capturing interest in donations through personal contacts and promoting the drive more directly
- Some calls for donations were challenged on social media, as excluding other groups by focusing on those missing from their collection (for example South East Asian or lesbian nurses)
- Finally, unanticipated costs meant a need to constantly re-consider their budget. BSL interpreting was a significant cost, particularly processing and subtitling BSL interviews. This means that accessibility costs need to be prioritised.

### **What tips does the museum have for other museums undertaking a similar project?**

The museum would offer the following tips to other museums:

- Take time to go and meet them, don't expect them to come to you. Meeting people on their own ground (e.g. at Springfield Hospital) helped us with donations and introductions to other contacts. Block out plenty of time to get to know people and listen to their stories

- Ask the group what might be needed to support collecting and displaying stories in their area. Carrying out BSL interviews was much easier having discussed the need for the interviewee to be filmed beforehand. Remember to consider the requirements of helpers, e.g. translators. BSL interpreters did not want their voices on film, as they were understandably uncomfortable speaking “for” someone else for posterity
- Planning time (and money) for translating and subtitling afterwards was vital
- Work with a variety of groups, as one group will have their own slant on the history. Including Deaf and deaf nurses meant that our exhibition didn’t solely focus on one aspect of what turned out to be very different experiences
- Give visitors the chance to respond: if people don’t feel represented, the opportunity to join in an ongoing conversation really helps
- Use first person narratives to communicate experience. Don’t try and write people’s stories for them. In the exhibition narrative they used direct quotes
- Expect some backlash. Championing diversity is about being brave and bold to speak out. This can mean some audiences dislike an angle you have taken. For example, our call out for testimonies from lesbian nurses prompted responses such as ‘Why should that make a difference to professional work?’ or ‘What about gay men?’ Always provide context and background for your project, outlining the specific reasons why the work is taking place.

## Other photographs



*Photograph of exhibition display case*

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