

Participants of the Heart n Soul project

Over £160,000 of money from National Lottery players will allow two groups in London to explore and share the experiences and history of people with disabilities.

The two new projects, in Kingston and Deptford, will look at different aspects of the history of people with disabilities in London, and the changing social attitudes towards disability, and bring these experiences to a wider audience.

Stuart Hobley, Head of HLF London, said: “These projects offer an excellent opportunity to delve into a part of our national story and understand it better. The experiences of disabled people are a significant part of the social history of London, and through using the lens of heritage our funding will help to share widely these stories of determination, triumph and many barriers broken.”

Fighting for our rights

With a grant of £76,900, Kingston Centre for Independent Living will investigate the history of the Disability Rights Movement in the UK, and the significant role played by networks in Kingston upon Thames. Working in partnership with Heritage2Health, Kingston University School of Education, St Philip’s School, and Kingston Archives, the project will examine how a user-led group formed in 1967 to campaign for equal rights, acceptance, more choice, and control, and eventually became the Kingston Centre for Independent Living.

Patron and founder member of Kingston Centre for Independent Living, Ann Macfarlane OBE, thanked HLF for making this possible, saying: “Without this funding, this heritage would be lost. By sharing these stories, we will make it relevant to today and inspire a new generation.”

The Big 30

2016 marks the 30th anniversary of Heart n Soul, a charity working with people with learning disabilities in Deptford. Thanks to a grant of £85,100, Heart n Soul will create an archive of learning disability culture, capturing oral histories from people in Deptford to build a picture of individual experiences, diverse communities and the impact of on-going social change. The project will allow people with disabilities to express themselves in their own words, and to choose how to communicate these stories. A dedicated archive will preserve these experiences for future generations, and a touring exhibition will allow the local community to engage with this often underappreciated aspect of social history.

Get involved

HLF aims to widen and support the ambition of everyone involved in building stronger, more equal access to heritage. We would like to encourage applications from organisations exploring these themes and looking to widen understanding of the experiences of people with disabilities.

HLF are also particularly keen to invest in the heritage of Kingston upon Thames, which is a priority borough for development. Groups can contact Anne Dodwell to discuss project ideas or book onto one of our monthly information sessions.