

Nurses welcome Aneurin Bevan into a hospital on the first day of the NHS University of Manchester

The University of Manchester has been awarded a National Lottery grant to create a social history of the now 70-year-old NHS.

The NHS at 70: The Story of our Lives project will create the first shared social history of the National Health Service.

Following a development grant of £199,100 in March 2017, the Centre for the History of Science, Technology & Medicine (CHSTM), part of the University's Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, has begun collecting stories from the NHS's patients and workers, as well as politicians and the general public.

Now the project has secured the full grant of £785,000 to carry on developing this shared archive and collecting treasured stories and memories of the NHS.

The last opportunity

Many of the health service's first patients and workers are now in their eighties and nineties; this anniversary marks one of the last opportunities to record their stories.

Over the course of the project and working with partners including Age UK, the Mental Health Foundation, Rethink Mental Illness, the Stroke Association, NHS, NHS Confederation and the TUC, 160 people of all ages and backgrounds

will be trained to gather stories and artefacts from the NHS's 70-year history.

[quote=Dr Stephanie Snow, NHS at 70 project leader]"Thanks to National Lottery players we have the opportunity to collect this history before it's too late."[/quote]

The Welsh inspiration for the NHS

Among the stories uncovered so far in the new archive (launched last month, June 2018), is that of 79-year-old Philip Prosser, who explained how a tiny Welsh society inspired Aneurin Bevan to create the NHS.

Philip, who was born with a 'club foot', was helped by the Tredegar Workmen's Medical Aid Society. His father paid a small weekly subscription to the Society formed by miners and steelworkers, entitling him to surgery on his feet in 1939.

Tredegar was also the hometown of Labour Minister Aneurin Bevan who masterminded the National Health Service nearly a decade later.

"When the NHS came in in 1948, I was transferred over. It was exactly the same as the NHS in 1948. We already had it in Tredegar before that," Philip told the interviewer (trained through the NHS at 70 project.)

Thanks to National Lottery players

Dr Stephanie Snow, NHS at 70 project leader, said: "Anyone can visit the project website, which is about working with volunteers from all walks of life to capture people's stories and memorabilia to mark the seventieth anniversary of the NHS and create an Archive that will be there for future generations.

"Thanks to National Lottery players we have the opportunity to collect this history before it's too late."

Multi-media content from the NHS at 70 project will also be shared through a touring exhibition, and films that will tour the UK in 2019 and 2020.



Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health, on the first day of the NHS at Park Hospital, Davyhulme

National Lottery funding helps mark 70th anniversary of the NHS



The Art Assassins, the South London Gallery’s young people’s forum Laura Wilson

History of health to be explored thanks to National Lottery players